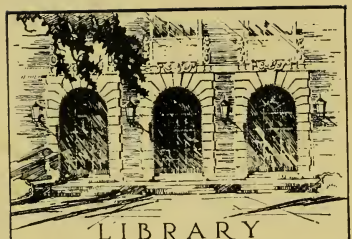

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TO-DAY IN IRELAND.

VOL. III.

OLD AND NEW LIGHT.

THE TOOLE'S WARNING.

TO-DAY IN IRELAND.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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OLD AND NEW LIGHT.

THE TOOLE'S WARNING.

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OLD AND NEW LIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

Those whose names have been on the rolls of Trinity in the years of thirteen and fourteen, must remember Charles St. George. He possessed quickness and assiduity, and was consequently a man of first-rate collegiate reputation; but that is little. He was more:—and all who, as friends or acquaintances, happened to come within the vortex, the irresistible influence of his converse, acknowledged him as such. The world is the best judge of talent, of that faculty calculated to rule it, to lead it, to treat it oyster-wise, like Ancient Pistol, and open it. But genius is a metal of more difficult assay,

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and requires the scrutiny of near approach, the touch of intimacy, to prove it. Even the written records of its power may be called in question; and minds of no superior temper may, by exercise, the habit of excitement, and perhaps artificial stimuli, as the annals of all poetries can witness, acquire the faculty of pouring forth sublimities on paper, calculated to catch the taste of the age; nay, of that age to come, called posterity, which we triumphantly appeal to, as the true test of fame. Let those who have been intimate with any of the renowned personages, the great creative spirits of our literature, ponder a moment, and consider if such were intrinsically the most superior minds they have ever come in contact with. I think they will, many of them at least, answer, no!—and that it will be found, that some old friend, lost for him and for the world alike in oblivion or imprudence, in insanity perhaps, or death, is the obscure being to whom each would adjudge, in preference to more bruited names, the possession of intellectual superiority.

Just such a being as this, was St. George. And his extraordinary powers of mind were universally allowed, accompanied, as they were in him, by weaknesses that satisfied the self-complacency of others, and soothed even envy into content of itself. Not that he was without vanity: none of his admirers were more aware of his powers, or more jealous of them, even to irritability. But an University, at least a circumscribed one similar to that of which he was a member, is not like the world, where no man or mind can hope to enter without encountering a rival. St. George was imaginative, was literary, was a poet; and though many fought with him for premiums or medals, none were prepared to dispute with the same rival the summit of Parnassus.

This may, perhaps, account for the pre-eminence, that none questioned or disputed, productive of untoward effect upon St. George. For this tacit tribute so universally rendered him, gradually undermined the natural diffidence of genius, and converted it into an overweening pride and self-opinion, that made him

often unhappy, and at times unamiable. Nothing can be more fatal, than this prematurely forced pride of intellect. The world is so apt to reverse the opinions of tutors and young contemporaries, that such objects of early flattery generally become *esprits manqués*, the victims of disappointment and misanthropy. It tends even to enfeeble the very mind that it prones, and by forcing it to over-wrought hope and premature exertion, to exhaust the powers, which, put into activity at a future period, could not fail to be successful, but which, strained to no purpose in their infant state, become afterwards incapable of due tension. Precocity of genius is but this premature excitement, and its effects are known to us even in proverb.

But it is preferable to let these qualities of my hero, dry in detail, develope themselves in his story. St. George was a young man of good family. His father was possessed of a very large property, which he had contrived to get through,—Heaven knew how,—no one else did. For he neither gambled nor drank, kept stud nor mistress, nor entertained; neither did he

seem given to speculate. He lived apparently upon one-fourth of his income; and the world accused him of the nearest parsimony in hoarding the other three-fourths. Upon his death, however, no store was found to be accumulated, except a long list of debts, that had eaten away the property seemingly so husbanded; and the world accused him dead as loudly of extravagance, as it had censured him living for avarice. How to solve the enigma, none knew; but the general verdict was, that old St. George had *muddled* away the property.

Charles, as an only son, succeeded to the wreck of his father's unaccountable economy, and found himself master of somewhat under three hundred pounds Irish per annum. It was an independence sufficient for the student, whose wants were few, and whose wishes, with respect to opulence, extended not beyond the enjoyment of such comforts as might be procured by that moderate income. His ambition—for a superior mind, such as I have described his, could not be, in youth especially, without the feeling — was not that single impulse towards a certain end,

that is at once the promise and assurance of success. His was rather a vague desire, an expansive grasp at excellence, aiming more at self-perfection than notoriety, and seeking in itself, as much as from the world, the meed of appreciation and applause.

This, together with a mind of serious mood, accustomed to look forward to futurity, even from the infancy of this life, led St. George to prefer the retirement and studious ease of the church, to the more lucrative and ambitious profession of the law. He wavered long, it is true; and in patriotic moments, when roused by some recent event or past historic scene, he cast an eye of longing towards the glorious tribune of the bar; but the hour of excitement and its wish passed together, and St. George obeyed the dictates of his calmer thought, by devoting himself to ecclesiastical studies and pursuits.

At the fit time, Charles St. George was, in consequence, ordained; and he soon after obtained the curacy of Ardenmore, in the county Louth.

With the most pleasing anticipations the young student forsook his college apartments for a country residence and a life of duty. The latter consideration afforded him most pleasure; —a contemplated change from idleness or leisure to activity, being more delightful than even the prospect of the contrary. His task was the highest and noblest man could undertake; precisely the one best suited to his talent, his earnestness, and feeling; the vocation hallowed to his religious mind by the sacredness of its character, and allowing in the exercise of clerical eloquence and unction just sufficient space for vanity to expatiate in a subordinate and repressed degree.

An imaginative being, such as St. George has been described, could not but exercise his favourite faculty in anticipating the situation he was about to fill. The visible he attempted to fancy; the village, the country, the house he was to occupy, and the visages with which he was to be surrounded—in all this he was of course mistaken. But in these, not more so than in the moral pictures which his fancy drew,

respecting the state of the county, and the opinions of its inhabitants. His ideas represented to him a gay, thoughtless, foxhunting squiralty, caring little for church or state, except as far as the Protestant ascendancy was concerned. Their wives and daughters he determined to be passing fair, simple, domestic, and untaught. For one great and unavoidable scene of quarrel he made up his mind, viz. the enmity and bigoted hatred between the higher and lower orders, between Protestant and Catholic; and his future conduct, in this religious warfare, he determined on preserving firm and moderate, at once orthodox and amiable.

The reader will perceive that our young curate might have spared himself this trouble. He was too exclusively a metropolitan to have gathered any just idea of the very different, and often diametrically opposite states of Ireland in its different counties; and he formed his notions respecting a particular spot from reports concerning the general mass. These anticipations occupied him during his drive down. What, then, was his astonishment, as he

sate the very evening of his arrival in his parlour, pondering how very different Ardenmore was from every thing he had imagined, when the priest of the parish, or rather the coadjutor Roman Catholic priest of the town, stepped in to welcome his arrival. This rival ecclesiastic of St. George's was a tall, stout, wide-mouthed, coarse, bony young fellow, with a huge grin, a huge brogue, huge appetite, huge thirst, and huge heart. When he was announced, St. George looked, and prepared himself for a combat, either personal or argumentative, or both; but the cordial grasp and benign grin of the priest, set all such thoughts instantly at rest. Never was subaltern, quartered in the most distant and solitary post, more delighted to behold the approach of a comrade, than was young Father M^cDowd at the coming of Charles. Of any difference of religion between them, or enmity for such trivial cause, M^cDowd seemed not to entertain the smallest idea; and he opened himself at once to St. George with the greatest frankness, instructed him gratuitously in all the little secrets of the town and

its vicinity, so requisite, as a kind of *carte du pays,* to the new comer; and detailed the connexions, bearings, feuds, friendships, respectabilities, and fallings off of all the neighbouring families. In short, St. George thought him the most obliging personage he had ever met; he asked him, "Would he take any thing?" Father M^{c}Dowd said, "He liked a rasher of all things;" and a rasher was ordered. "Who could eat of that specimen of Irish cookery without some liquid to wash it down withal?" Whiskey was procured; and as Charles was abstinent in potation, his new acquaintance undertook to drink for both. During three hours of sitting, the priest continued to unbosom himself of a load of secret scandal, concerning all who were not his flock, that he had been the years of his office in gathering; he swore eternal friendship to St. George, damned all difference of religion, got roaring drunk, and staggered home; leaving St. George struck with amazement at having acquired such a friend, and at having spent thus the first evening of his ministry. For although he had but sipped in concert with

the swallows of M^c^Dowd, still those very sips proved sufficient to discomfort his brain.

"Well!" thought St. George to himself as he rose upon the following morning, "there is here one unpleasantness at least less than I reckoned upon; religious dissensions cannot possibly run high in this part of the country. The priest and I are the best friends in the world. And if we be satisfied, who can have a right to be discontented?"

As soon as St. George's arrival became generally known, visitors began to crowd in upon him. The shopkeepers and comfortable town's people first paid their respects, and not a little astounded St. George by the rude and disrespectful freedom of manner, more prevalent as one approaches the north of Ireland, and which is contrasted with the almost servile courtesy of the south. Amongst the general topics discussed at first visits, St. George could not help noticing the warmth and regret with which his new parishioners spoke of their late curate; whose fervour, eloquence, and sound doctrine, seemed to resound, like a living

epitaph, in the mouths of all. An epitaph, however, as yet he needed not; the primate having merely taken objection to his over-sanctity, which had caused him to remove from Ardenmore to a more western diocese, of which the bishop was supposed to favour more the holy views and principles of the Reverend Mr. O'Sing. This was painful to Charles, who felt that he had the misfortune of succeeding, perhaps seemingly displacing, a kind of martyr. O'Sing's martyrdom, it is true, was but translation; still, to his disconsolate parishioners, his removal seemed nothing short of downright persecution.

Mr. O'Sing, the predecessor of Charles, of whom a certain portion of the Dumfermlinites spoke in such raptures, was a young man of weak intellect, and warm imagination; the ascendancy of the latter power over the former faculty being greatly increased by nerves of the weakest order, and a sensibility most diseased. His was one of those minds, upon which reasoning, even demonstrative, has no influence: feeling, with him, included every thing—argu-

ment, conviction, creed, devotion;—and, accordingly, to his beloved *feeling* he reduced every thing. In private life this might have been amiable, even if it had been a little ridiculous; but in the grave ministry of the church, where manly votaries at least are to be won and cherished, not as a lover would his mistress, by tears and pathos and fond pleading, but by a rational exposition of the truth, the dolorous and sentimental behaviour of Mr. O'Sing became really absurd. Sure, however, that *feeling* could not be wrong—Mr. O'Sing obeyed its capricious dictates to a most ludicrous extent: he prayed in society, and conversed from the reading desk;—in the drawing-room he preached, and in the pulpit he wept;—so that the sanctified curate might have been described, as when nearest the church to have been farthest from God!

With his particular tenets I shall not trouble my readers; not intending to allow the light ploughshare, with which I skim the surface of character, to sink deep into the heavy earth of polemics. Suffice it to say, on this point he

talked a great deal about something that he called *grace;* and that his opponents made use of a word of equal importance, for it contained precisely the same number of letters, and this was—*works.* Being, however, a novelist, not a controversialist, *Davus non Œdipus,* I shall confine myself to the apparent consequences, without discussing the mysterious and subtle principles of very evident and substantial discord.

However ridiculous and weak, O'Sing was, owing to his very defects, highly calculated to be the disseminator of a sect; and his success had been proportionably great. His proselytes in and about Ardenmore were numerous, especially amongst the weaker sex, whom his pathos, and cambric handkerchief moistened with pulpit tears, never failed to move. Even the good squires, who slumbered or snored during the young apostle's preaching, heard his doctrines subsequently repreached to them by domestic missionaries, with whom for peace-sake it was always best to coincide. This proselytism had, however, not been universal; many of both

sexes still held out against Mr. O'Sing, and shut their eyes against his New Light; the old people, from hatred of innovations, and respect for their old established church and creed —the young, from dislike to the puritanic spirit of the New Light, that sought to banish dancing, and every innocent amusement from society; and even chid too exuberant a smile from the countenance. It was the remonstrance of this latter, or Old Light party, that had influenced the Primate to remove the saintly O'Sing from officiating any longer in his diocese.

The act of prevention came as usual too late. The seed had been already sown; and the best means, perhaps, of checking its further growth would have been to allow O'Sing to remain in his cure; when, after the novelty of his enthusiasm had worn away, the absurdity of both him and his innovations would have become prominent. Severe vindictiveness towards him, on the part of higher powers, such as was his removal, was all that was wanting to convert the preacher into an apostle, and his admirers into a sect. Then, indeed, his peculiar

tenets acquired sanctity and strength ; the mind of man, like his mother earth, never producing a stout crop of opinion till it has been torn and furrowed by the harsh plough of persecution.

Amongst O'Sing's disciples the lower order, whose feelings in loyalty, its contrary, in religion, or in any party-following, are always personal if possible, looked upon the new curate with alienation and resentment. The higher proselytes, whose attachment was to the sectarian spirit, not to its preacher, approached St. George, on the contrary, with the blandest countenances of favour and patronage. Of this number, Gervas Lowrie, Esquire, of Laylands, took an early opportunity of visiting St. George, and begged his company to dinner on the following Saturday.

This invitation had scarcely been accepted by St. George, and its severe and solemn bearer turned his horse from the door, when a gentleman of the opposite party came to pay his respects to the curate. As Mr. Pennington coming, met Mr. Lowrie departing, a smile

accompanied the salute of the former, which might have been interpreted, " We are both early in the field, and on the same errand;" but Lowrie, though he returned the amicable salute, disdained a smile on any such trivial occasion.

They were both gentlemen of the first rank and property in the country; Mr. Lowrie, perhaps, the wealthier of the two, although Mr. Pennington, from his affability and style of living, was more popular, and more respected amongst all ranks. He came to pay the same compliment, and make the same request with St. George's last visitor,—of his company to dinner on the following Sunday. " But," continued that gentleman, " as we are all at Ardenmore House anxious of your acquaintance, and as you must be lonely these first days of your sojourn, you will favour us by waving ceremony, and partaking of our family repast to-day."

There was a frankness about Mr. Pennington that won at once the open heart of St. George, who willingly yielded to his last as well as

his first demand. And between the hours of five and six, our young curate was seated at the family board of Ardenmore House; and feeling more at home than perhaps the student had ever done in the company of so many guests. His present host, he learned, was a widower; and as young Pennington was for the present abroad on his travels, the family consisted, in addition to the master of the house, but of his niece and daughter.

Miss Pennington, the orphan of her uncle's eldest brother, was a young lady, whom the fashionable admirers of the sex would have declared *un peu passée*, and who, by the vulgar, was frequently set down as "no chicken." Still she was beautiful, and, in despite of time, never had been more so. The years were there; maturity was manifest; but in what trait or feature none could discover, for of a wrinkle there was not even a trace. Her countenance was that of a clear brunette, approaching to the embonpoint, her person generous, tall, and ample; and there was that expression in her look, that depth of feeling in her eye, which,

united to her extreme and perfect beauty, struck the beholder with astonishment at a celibacy so long delayed. That state, however, had been Miss Pennington's choice hitherto: she did not want fortune to set off her charms, nor was she by any means a prude;—but a jilt and a coquet she had been. Few could have conjectured, or even believed this, from the seeming softness of her disposition; but the experience of many a suitor had proved, to their own discomfiture, and for the information of the country, that Miss Pennington's bright eyes were basilisks, that loved to wound, and yet scorned to heal.

Miss Mary Pennington, her cousin, and her junior by at least ten years, though not endowed with the fascinations of Louisa, whom we have just described, had still, it seemed, sufficient attractions to attach to her side young Harry Lowrie, the heir of Laylands, and who, except St. George, was at present the only guest at Ardenmore House.

"I saw your father to-day, Harry," said Mr. Pennington.

"Did you, Sir!" replied Harry. "Pray, what was the old gentleman about?"

"Much upon the same business with myself, —paying his respects to Mr. St. George."

"Oh, oh!" cried the young man, "the *congregation* are already on the alert. You must take care of yourself, Mr. St. George."

"As how, pray, Sir?"

"You must know, Mr. St. George," said the host, "that Mr. Lowrie's family have become of late what we call in this country *New Light*."

"Decidedly *Gas*, I assure you," added Harry.

"And what may this *New Light* mean?" asked St. George.

At this palpable ignorance of their new curate all present replied by a profound stare, being far more astonished than if he had pleaded ignorance of the existence of such a being as the Pope. Mr. Pennington was, however, pleased to find the new curate as yet pure and uninoculated with this cant of semi-Methodism, grown so prevalent in the metropolis and the northern counties of Leinster.

"When Mr. St. George has spent an evening at Laylands," said Miss Mary Pennington, "he will know perfectly well what *New Light* means. Why, they would not allow dancing there on any account!"

"Of reading a novel they would abhor the thought," cried Miss Pennington, equally horrific herself at such rigidity; "and their pianos would not stoop to music less grave than 'Let the bright Seraphim,' or, 'Angels ever bright and fair.'"

"For Heaven's sake! Louisa, don't mention that Seraphim," cried Harry; "I have heard that tune so constantly of late, that Shaun caught me whistling it to the hounds last week; and asked me from what witch I had learned that confounded *cronon,* that was setting the dogs off their sport. My father, Sir," continued the young man to St. George, "has sold his hunter the other day, and gave away his pack, not to me or to any honest sportsman who would use them;—he should distribute them in separate couples to every poacher about the country, spoiling the sport that he thinks it now sin to

partake of:—now, that 's what I call *New Light.*"

As St. George did not satisfactorily comprehend this exposition of the new sectarian tenets by the young people, he turned for explanation to his host.

"You may perceive, Mr. St. George," said that gentleman, "that our New Light friends differ with us more by affecting a rigid, puritanical way of life, than by any peculiar tenets they uphold. Still these they are not without, subdued as they keep them, for fear of finding themselves without the pale of the church. Far be from me the impertinent wish, or attempt, to bias or advise you; but as endeavours of the most zealous kind will certainly be used to win you over to saintliness, let me indulge a hope that you will resist them; and that beneath your ministry, our young people may be allowed their dances; our old people their jokes and their cards, if they will; and that the parishioners at large may hear common and uncontroversial sense from the pulpit. Will you be offended at this, Mr. St. George?"

"On the contrary, Sir; I feel grateful for being thus placed upon my guard."

St. George indulged in no further observation, esteeming it imprudent to bind himself to any line of conduct, especially upon the partial statement of one side of the question. Mr. Pennington approved his silence, although the ladies and young Lowrie dreaded it. The latter whispered Miss Mary, that he feared the new curate to be "as great a quiz as the blubbering O'Sing;" and Miss Pennington resolved to support her uncle's arguments in winning over St. George, with all the fascinations that she could muster for the purpose.

During the whole course of after-dinner conversation, St. George did not recover his astonishment at finding himself thrown upon a land of controversy—Gulliver was not more annoyed when he stumbled on Laputa—a controversy, too, in which he was totally uninstructed and unprepared. Against Deist or Catholic opponents he had armed himself with the breast-plate and back-plate of orthodoxy; but the side armour to defend him against those faithless

allies, that attacked him insidiously in flank, he was totally without. "Heavens!" mentally ejaculated he, "what a land!—discord and dissension are its very elements! Here, in this county, equally removed from Catholicism and Presbyterianism, where the established religion prevails more triumphantly than in any part of Ireland, the very Protestants split instant ly nto parties, and, forgetful of the common enemy that rages around them, they combat and argue and hate for some minor points of difference, habits of life, and such like, with more virulence and animosity than what in other countries separates Turk and Christian. It was to escape this wordy warfare, this turmoil, this ambition, that I shunned the bar, and sought the retirement of the church; and yet this very harbour, whither I have fled, I find tossed and agitated by fiercer waves than even the wide ocean of life."

He was not interrupted in these meditations by the conversation of Mr. Pennington and young Lowrie; which turned, for the most part, on the state of the crops, the average price of corn in the Drogheda market, Lord Oriel's health,

detonating guns, and Bellewstown races. St. George joined the ladies, and in their company the young curate felt the weight lightened which his reflections had cast upon his spirits, and which all the good sense of Mr. Pennington, and the jocular spirits of young Harry, could not in the least remove.

Unaccustomed to female society, it was a new and sufficient happiness for St. George to feel himself in the presence of the fair. Interesting conversation, so requisite to make such society tolerable, he did not require from female lips, to enhance his delight; and Miss Pennington need have taken no pains whatever to entrap the student, whose heart, firm, and warm, and honest as it was, lay, most unconsciously to the owner, at the disposal of any young lady possessed of passing beauty, kindness, and feeling. Such easy conquests women do and may despise, but they are not the less constant, the less valuable, or true.

Miss Pennington, however, was a conqueror, accustomed to neglect no means of victory, however trivial; and she had accordingly arm-

ed herself with a volume of Scott, for our curate's approach. She at first doubted the fitness of the volume, as a specimen of her studious taste to a young ecclesiastic, but in proof of a mere love of reading itself, it might draw on the conversation to a field, where she might display the feelings calculated irrecoverably to ensnare the retired and pensive youth. Miss Mary Pennington was evidently engaged to Harry Lowrie, so that there was no embarrassment of choice in the case; our hearts, as Lord Kaimes has somewhere expatiated on in his minute way of philosophising, accommodating their attachments wonderfully to necessity, and to the probabilities of success.

"Play on, Mary," said Miss Pennington to her sister, who was seated at the piano, and had ceased her music on the entrance of St. George: we must not make a stranger of Mr. St. George. "You must let him hear too the sweet sound of the instrument, and of your voice, that he may know what he has to lose should he be inclined to join the ranks of the enemy."

St. George already thought there was but

little chance of this. And he said so actually, bungling the compliment, however, in such a manner as to be utterly incomprehensible to the younger lady at least.

"Then we are not to reckon upon you, sir?" said Miss Mary, disappointed.

"How can you be so stupid, Mary? Mr. St. George assures us, that we *may* reckon upon him."

To this the student's assent was given; not in words, which failed and would not come, but in so confused and ambiguous a motion, that Miss Pennington changed the subject at once.

"Do you admire Walter Scott, Mr. St. George?"

"I am a rapturous admirer of his writings, madam."—The last word ungraciously distinct.

"But don't you think he wants passion?"

St. George pondered to consider the question which the fair *bleue* had now asked, for the ninety-ninth time in her life; it being in fact

her leading remark always in her attack upon a youth of sensibility.

" He seems to write for sober, staid, elderly readers," continued the female critic, " and thinks it not worth his while to stoop to the taste of *us* young people. His love-scenes are always *understood*, as my cousin William used to say. I should like a hero to love with more ardour, more enthusiasm, and I like to hear too what he has to say for himself. Don't you, Mary ?"

St. George was on his own ground, and in delight, which Miss Louisa did not fail to perceive. Scott had not yet written that glorious answer to such critical cavils, since given—he had not published Ivanhoe. But St. George had arguments wherewith to defend his favourite; and the very kind of discussion that the artful Louisa had planned to draw forth her feeling, taste, and literary acquirements to the student's admiration, took place, and with full effect. St. George was in very ecstasy. He gazed in raptures upon his fair colloquist, and

imbibed the insidious poison both at eye and ear. Such an intellect, such feeling, *he* had never witnessed ; and then, such eyes ! Poor St. George was lost, bewildered.

" Expleri mentem nequit, ardescitque tuendo."

CHAPTER II.

The few hours of the evening thus spent formed to St. George a greater adventure than had ever befallen him. All his sensations were new; and he experienced a feeling of delight similar to that with which we for the first time tread the shore of a foreign land. Isolated hitherto, interested in trains of abstracted thought, or perhaps in boyish emulation, his present excitement seemed of a nobler order, springing from a nobler cause. His energies were aroused, and he seemed to draw in fresh breath for the chace of life, in which, young as he was, his ardour had been often wont to slacken and sink in apathy. Contrary to all moral precedent,

in his mind ambition had preceded love; and thoughts of future fame, or rather thoughts of having merited it, were the distant gleams that cheered him on. Obscuring these, the charms of Miss Pennington seemed to spring at once, as a meteor, before his path; and seen as such through the atmosphere that surrounds the vision of an idealist, they formed an object of surpassing and almost unearthly brightness.

By the splendour of this dazzling luminary, all other light, whether New or Old, was actually eclipsed in the mind of the young ecclesiastic. He felt even, if not disinclined, at least distracted from the grave duties of his sacred office; and he could not stoop to consider for a moment, or enquire into the points of controversy that divided the whole country at the time. A morning visit to Ardenmore House had not tended to remove this disinclination: so that with all this, taking into consideration the first ferment of such feelings as his were, yet unchecked, as they seldom are in so early a state, by fear or misgivings, may

be supposed the reluctance with which, on the morning of Saturday, he contemplated the necessity of dining at Laylands.

Could the inhabitants of that sanctified spot possibly have imagined the employment in which their intended proselyte spent the morning of that day, they would have despaired in horror of his alliance. St. George was idle enough that morning to commit verse, — actual verse in rhyme, strophe and stanza; after which profane occupation he mounted his horse, and proceeded at a grave and becoming pace, to Laylands, not without a retrospect to Ardenmore House, which led him to contrast what he expected with that which he had experienced — the gracious smile of Miss Pennington, starting up by the side of the grim etiquette, that he anticipated in his reception by the Lowries. During his short ride St. George could not fail to remark with delight, the more welcome as it was contrary to his expectation, the kindly reverence with which he was saluted and welcomed to the county by the peasants whom he chanced to meet. They

indeed seemed to be his flock more than the puritanic townsfolk, who looked grimly and suspiciously upon him from under the banner of Mr. O'Sing.

The huge and pure white front of the mansion of Laylands, conspicuous amidst the green of lawn and grove, rivetted St. George's thought to the anticipation of the family he was about to face. The gate and avenue looked suspiciously and primly neat; the keeper or keeperess of the gate seemed a starched specimen of holiness; the very cattle looked grave; — the oxen chewed their cud without moving a muscle, and the carriage horses, turned out to enjoy a roll, evidently disdained the idle prank, and applied themselves instead to the after-grass as "steeds of a more serious turn of mind."

The curate soon unbestrid his nag, was received with cordiality by Mr. Lowrie, and introduced by that gentleman to the respective members of his family. Mrs. Lowrie curtsied gravely, and more gravely still the same feat was performed by Miss Jemima, Miss Ellen,

and Miss Grace. Young Harry shook St. George by the hand, and welcomed him to Laylands.

" I am glad you are come at last, Mr. St. George, to remove the perplexity of these young ladies, who have been questioning me for this hour, whether your face was long or short, your hair combed straight, or against the grain—whether—"

" I wonder at you, Harry!" said Miss Grace.

" I am ashamed of you, Harry!" said Miss Ellen.

" I am shocked at you, Harry!" said Miss Jemima.

And the three fair sisters blushed pale and purple, at having their zealous enquiries respecting their new minister's Light, thus interpreted maliciously into curiosity respecting his person.

The present may be the best opportunity of mentioning that the introduction of New Light into Laylands had been owing to these young ladies. They were young, but not very young; say four, five, and six-and-twenty were their respective ages; and consequently there had passed over their heads some six or eight years of their most

attractive period of bloom and beauty, without bringing to their sides one declared lover, or probable husband. That they ever sought or desired to see such a being, I would not affirm —young ladies never can be suspected of such views. But certainly for one month in each of these years they had not failed to shew themselves in the gay society of Dublin; and at other times the ten or twelve miles distance between Laylands and Drogheda was never an obstacle to their journeying to and from the assemblies of that gay town. In despite of all this, however, whether it proceeded from want of beauty, accomplishment, or good fortune; or whether, as is often the case, adventurous beaus were frightened or puzzled in approaching the sororial trio, so it happened, that the thus vacant places at their sides had never been, one of them, satisfactorily filled. Now, as love is the natural occupation of youth, and as the Miss Lowries were far too well behaved to fall in love *gratis* and of their own accord, they began at length to feel the necessity of supplying its place by some enthusiastic feeling of kindred excitement. And at the hour most

a-propos, the zealous, eloquent, and sensitive O'Sing made his appearance in the pulpit of Ardenmore church, and instantly decided the direction in which the sprouting sensibilities of the Miss Lowries should shoot. Pity is akin to love, say the poets—so is sanctity, saith observation, much given to the tender passion,—and Miss Jemima Lowrie, as she was heroically bidding adieu to all further thoughts of love, that she might devote herself exclusively to

"Maiden meditation, fancy free,"

received a dart in the very hour of flight from the hitherto inattentive little deity, that left her heart in a piteous state of perplexity, sadly taken not only with the preaching, but the person, of Mr. O'Sing. In return, that weeping ecclesiastic, who, through his tears had always a shrewd eye to his interest, was neither blind nor ungrateful to the preference of Miss Jemima. And the lovers were meditating an holy *escapade* together, when the primate's dismissal came to mar at once the effects of his eloquence, both sacred and profane. It is astonishing, that in

her former graceless state of luke-warm religion, Miss Jemima could never for a moment have dared to entertain the thought of flying from her parents, and uniting herself to a poor upstart, for such was O'Sing; but sanctity is a supreme excellence, the consciousness of possessing which counterbalances and excuses in its possessor a world of foible.

How the young ladies had contrived to win over their parents to this *New Light*, as it was called, is quite as inexplicable to me; but certain it is, that the old people received from their offspring this fruit that seemed to convey to them now, for the first time in their long lives, a knowledge of good and evil—the evil past, the good to come. Mr. O'Sing was, no doubt, instrumental; but the truth is, that fanaticism, especially in the better or higher ranks of life, always commences its attack wisely upon the weaker sex, and from them is communicated to that weaker portion of the stronger, who find it at once peaceable and congenial to them to follow the dictates of their spouses.

Young Harry Lowrie, the son, remained

proof, as our readers have seen, against all the arts of sanctity, to the horror of his sisters, and the great present relief of St. George.

"I hope," said Harry, addressing the curate, as dinner grew towards its conclusion, after a long continuance of solemn silence, unbroken, except by most serious mastication, "I hope, St. George, that you have brought a couple of good dogs with you to the country;—none of your lazy, tender-footed pointers; but thorough-going spaniels, for high and low ground, thick and thin;—these are the dogs for bachelor parsons, that have nothing to do but shoot the week through! However, if you have not, my father, Sir, can spare you a pair, now that the gun has grown too heavy for him; and in September, my boy, I 'll show you sport!"

"Mr. St. George surely does not shoot?" said Mr. Lowrie.

"Never handled a gun, I assure you, Sir." And a smile of hope at the reply beamed on the countenances of Mrs. and the three Miss Lowries.

'Well, you hunt, at any rate?" continued

Harry; "and we still have the club-hounds three times a-week."

"I'm but a poor horseman!" replied again St. George; and another smile lit up the countenances of the ladies.

"Well, you are an exception to the parson-tribe of Louth; some of them are the best shots and the boldest horsemen in Leinster. Are they not, Sir?" said the young man, putting his father to the necessity of owning the fearful truth.

"I am sorry to say they are," said Mr. Lowrie, "very Nimrods after their kind; and they think more of killing fox and partridge, than of tending the flock committed to their charge."

"For which reason, Mr. St. George," continued the audacious Harry, "their flocks brouse peaceably, and live fatter and happier, undisturbed by the barking and worrying of shepherds' dogs."

"Fie, Harry! compare a clergyman to a dog!" cried Miss Jemima.

"Sad dogs they are too, many of them,

Jemima; but you won't set Mr. St. George and me at loggerheads; whereas, in other counties, where churchmen, instead of being innocent Nimrods, are very Sauls,—persecutors, armed with magisterial authority against the hostile Catholics, their flock enjoying neither peace nor pasture, and are left with very little wool."

"Harry! Harry!" said his father, "how you will run on talking of what you know nothing about! What are other counties to us, pray?"

"They make part of the same kingdom."

"Poh!—Mr. St. George, a glass of wine?"

"You must not mind what my son says, Mr. St. George," said Mrs. Lowrie; "he is a hair-brained youth; and much as we have struggled to convert him to something like a becoming gravity of demeanour and conversation, he resists,—he resists, from the spirit of opposition, I believe. I wish, Mr. St. George, you would take him into your hands, and lecture him."

"No, good mother; but I'll take Mr. St. George into my hands, and lecture him!"

Old blundering dames are always bringing folk into these awkward predicaments, such as

this was to St. George, who knew not in what manner to assert his dignity, how to look, or what to say.

"Harry is growing quite intolerable," said Miss Ellen; "and every day that he dines at Ardenmore, he returns worse and worse."

"Mr. St. George has seen Mr. Pennington's family?" said Mrs. Lowrie.

"I had the pleasure of meeting your son there, Ma'am."

"And how do you like Miss Pennington?" said Jemima.

"She is not ill-looking," said the curate, his heart leaping into his mouth.

"She was not," rejoined the fair Jemima. Ladies approaching the "certain age," are always severe on those who precede them even by a year.

"I should not have thought her advanced in years!"

"Oh, dear me, very!" rejoined Miss Jemima, in a tone expressive of the most earnest love of truth; "why, let me see,—as long as I remember, when I was quite a child, I remember

Louisa Pennington a *grown* girl, as tall as ever she was since."

"Jemmy, Jemmy!" said her brother, using an abbreviation that his sister held in abhorrence, "are not both your growths marked from half-year to half-year above on the architrave of the nursery-door?—there never was a quarter of an inch between ye!"

"Fie! now, Harry," exclaimed the younger Miss Lowrie; "Jemima has grown within these three years, to our own knowledge!"

"Then it must have been in grace," replied the incorrigible Harry.

Mrs. Lowrie cast up her eyes in hopeless horror; and Mr. Lowrie was preparing grave materials for a reproof to his son, when the youth anticipated the attack he foresaw by a warm eulogium upon the Penningtons in general, and Miss Louisa in particular, whose beauty he declared to be peerless in Louth.

"You need be so exorbitant for Louisa's personal attraction," said Miss Jemima; "you know she has the beauties of the *mind*."

"She sings Italian music," said Miss Ellen.

"And knows every novel from The Monastery to The Monk;" said Miss Grace.

"Monk, child! what do you know about monks?"

"Nothing, muther!" said the petrified damsel.

"Not so much, I hope," said Harry, "as our friend Lady Broadstreet, who knows all, except the objectionable passages, which she finds out first, and skips afterwards."

"Indeed!" said Miss Jemima; returning to the charge; "Miss Pennington may thank her blueism for the loss of so many beaus."

"Rather her coquetry, dear," said Mrs. Lowrie.

"Agreed, mother," replied Harry, "and her cruelty. Louisa has certainly made cruel havoc with her charms. Honest Dick Fortescue broke his neck hunting for the love of her; and Cuffe drowned her memory and his own life at once in the bowl. Her glances fell thick and fatal, as French bullets, on the army-list, and every victory in Spain has cost her twenty lovers. You must take care of her, St. George."

St. George answered with a smile as little ghastly as possible. Every fresh word of this apparently light and trifling conversation subverted more and more his late arrangements of hope and happiness, and rudely startled him from his first pleasant dream of love. A pin's weight turns the scale of our hopes and fears in these matters, and sinks them from above the beam to the very level of utter despair. An hour since St. George saw no reason why Miss Pennington should not be his; now he abandoned the hope at once, and accused the temerity that served but to rob his mind of its tranquillity. This first spring and consequent depression may always be expected; but St. George was no philosopher in these matters, and felt sick at heart at the sudden evanition of his aërial hopes. There was even more in reserve for him.

"However, she has one straw yet left to cling to, Harry," said Miss Jemima; "has the Rev. Sir Starcourt Gibbs been lately to Ardenmore?"

"When tired of cock-shooting, penning Orange diatribes, killing hunters, and such sports, he betakes himself from *ennui* to Ar-

denmore, where he prostrates himself before Miss Louisa the first day, jests and quarrels with her the second, and is off the third."

"The very torturing lover she deserved!" said Jemima.

"If you had but such another, Jemmy!"

Mr. Lowrie all this time sipped his wine in dignified silence, disdaining to interfere in the rather scandalous conversation of the young people, which he, however, permitted as a skirmish against the enemy, and tending to effect the grand purpose of the evening,—the winning over of St. George. When the fair *tirallieurs* had retired, he prepared to bring forward himself his solid masses of argument against these latitudinarian followers of the church, that called themselves Protestants. At the first rumbling of the polemic artillery, Harry Lowrie, who knew, if he remained, that he would be led to oppose, and perhaps anger his father, retired, and left the fanatic squire to preach divinity to the love-preoccupied divine. St. George suffered the enemy to take up his positions unnoticed; and Mr. Lowrie had gone over a considerable

space of controversial ground, unresisted, and was rapidly proceeding to his conclusions, ere St. George became aware that his conversion was not only begun, but nearly accomplished. Thus closely pressed, he denied, rebutted, confuted; but the squire, in answer observed, that all these points had been conceded half-an-hour since. "I have got a most dreadful and stupefying head-ache," exclaimed St. George, interrupting a long text from St. Paul, "and feel at present quite incapable of appreciating your acute arguments, Mr. Lowrie."

"That's unfortunate, Mr. St. George; and to-morrow's Sunday. To-morrow is the decisive day on which the inhabitants of this parish are to learn what kind of doctrine they are to expect from a young minister, of whom Fame has spoken loudly."

"Fame has been too flattering, certainly," said St. George; "and I cannot see what event is to take place to-morrow decisive of this important question."

"Your first appearance in Ardenmore pulpit, Sir; your preaching,—your sermon!"

"My sermon, Sir, was composed a twelvemonth ago, long before I was aware even of the existence of the religious differences that I now perceive around me. It will be upon a theme quite irrelevant to these disputed points."

"Worse and worse! this comes of the lazy habit of reading and composing clerical discourses, instead of using extempore force and eloquence, which must always be to the purpose, and come home to the floating opinions of the time. Why! this will be desertion, trimming—a suspense more dangerous than an open declaration against us. He that is not with us, is against us."

"Then I fear—but I would not join either side of a question that I have not thoroughly examined. To decide any thing before to-morrow, however, were impossible, and to prepare another sermon more so."

Nothing is impossible to a true and earnest zeal," said Mr. Lowrie; "let us argue the point over again, if you will, calmly:"—St. George actually shuddered—"and after tea, if we set our heads together, a sermon may be

soon composed. I myself, the girls, all will contribute willingly, to copy at least to your dictation."

This was indeed a vigorous attack, that St. George was called on to parry. The whole had evidently been a preconceived plan, and Saturday night fixed on for the *coup de main*, to combat all evasion. St. George perceived this; and, flexible as he was, roused himself to resistance; the thoughts too of being invited to write a sermon as an amusement after tea, made him recur to Mary Pennington's music, Louisa's conversation, the social frankness and hilarity of Ardenmore-house. Were he compelled to choose between it and Laylands, the preference admitted not of debate. But of Louisa, the coquette, the cruel, he bethought him; and the puritanism of Laylands then had charms. It may be considered a slur upon the pure zeal of St. George in his calling, that he was influenced in his choice by such unworthy motives; he was not exactly influenced, since he deferred his decision; but even had he followed them, they were at least reason, comprehensible, and

of common sense, not likely to be said of one founded on a controversial examination.

Mr. Pennington, who had perceived the easy, unopposing character of the new curate, and reckoned thereon, thought that a man at once of his consequence and sanctity, might get astride the reason of his proselyte, and urge it in the direction he pleased; but St. George, like an animal that I would not name in comparison with him, took at once a firm position of resistance, resolved not to budge an inch in advance for that time; moreover, declaring that resolve.

This broke short at once the dialogue; and the baffled host, with his guest, sought the drawing-room. How different this apartment, the air of which is always an index of its inhabitants, from that of Ardenmore. At Laylands, the furniture was, perhaps, gayer; but all was concealed, more through rigidity than economy, from the every-day eye;—the carpets were be-baized, and the sofas be-pinnafored. The heavy grand piano, too, was muffled up, as through the fear of its catching cold; and its

chords were mute, the young ladies scorning to indulge the profane and unbending curate, for they had gathered his character from Mr. Lowrie's glance, even in their beloved "bright Seraphim." Harry had retreated to his horses and his dogs. Miss Jemima was cutting paper for the Sunday grate. Miss Ellen and Miss Grace stitching pincushions to give, by way of alms, to the poor, who sold them. Mrs. Lowrie held in her hand that most stupid of books, written by the most stupid of men, Doddridge; which, although good manners kept her from perusing, still her forefinger keeping its place tenaciously between the leaves plainly hinted to the guest, that in the event of his absence, Mistress Lowrie would have been more agreeably and profitably occupied.

The attack was not renewed; hopelessness of all success was read in Mr. Lowrie's more than serious demeanour; and the young ladies, devoutly and silently attentive to their pincushions and paper, spoke not a word for the rest of the evening. St. George longed to

be delivered to the pain, even if it should be so, of his own solitary thoughts; and he, consequently, took the earliest opportunity of wishing a good night to the disappointed Saints of Laylands.

CHAPTER III.

St. George had been in Miss Pennington's company twice, the latter time merely for a few seconds. The young lady had, of course, been affable; — and upon this foot square of sand the student had built him not only castles, but towering minarets. He calculated the probabilities of success;—Love is very fond of calculating and conning over these points;—he possessed a small independence, and had the church before him—he surveyed himself, for the first time, critically in a mirror, and declared face and figure to be tolerable. Youngsters have always the erroneous idea, that women care for personal beauty. He was shy, to be sure, but ease and audacity were attainable; and the divine placed Chesterfield by the side of Sher-

lock's Sermons. The lady was, perhaps, his senior: the more serious and lasting then, thought he, will be her attachment, and of rivals there will be less danger. As the rising affections of the student were, as yet however, less the impulse of blind passion, than the longing of imagination to realize the scenes of happiness that it had long anticipated, he was contented to wait, to lengthen out, and to enjoy love's delicious prologue, and to make his advances cautiously, so as not to compromise, he flattered himself, his dignity or peace.

Such were the outworks behind which our curate fell to rearing his towers—insufficient to protect them:—they were undermined, and toppled fearfully during the splenetic remarks of the Misses Lowrie, and at the acknowledgment of Harry, they fell at once prostrate to the ground. Louisa's blueism he could have pardoned, nay, admired; but coquetry, cruelty, a baronet for a rival, were impediments from which all his resolutions and affections shrunk. He congratulated himself upon so timely a warning and escape, and endeavoured, not alto-

gether unsuccessfully, to persuade himself, with all the force of his imagination, that solitary bliss was that which best suited his studious and contemplative habits.

Deeply as such thoughts occupied his Saturday evening, he had resolution sufficient to forbid their re-appearance on the morrow; the early part of which, at least, he conscientiously determined to devote, undistracted, to his Maker, and his sacred office. With this feeling of duty impressed on his mind, he sank to rest, and rose with it fresh and prohibitive of even a trivial thought. The nervous task, too, of officiating for the first time was before him,—alone sufficient to make him forget any other cause of anxiety. He found the congregation a full and attentive one. St. George's dignified earnestness and eloquence made a favourable impression, of his talents and piety at least, upon all. And his importance, as well as impartiality towards the dissentient followers of Old, or of New Light, were alike manifest.

The reading-desk or the pulpit would neither of them be a decorous position whence,

with my hero, I could take a survey of the personages which composed the congregation. St. George cast but a few stray glances down; the Lowries were there, all armed with Bible and Psaltery; they rose whenever there was an excuse to stand—in prayer, suited the action to the word, theatrically—and left the clerk, in despite of his emulation, in such a sad minority of voice, that he might have spared his lungs, and opened his mouth tuneless for form-sake. It was not until preparing to leave the church that he perceived the Penningtons; and so warmly was he congratulated by them, thanked for his eloquence, etcetera, especially by Miss Louisa, that all his suspicions might have vanished before her smile, but that she leaned upon the arm of another. Perhaps, however, it was a relation, an intimate friend, a cousin—and he cursed all cousins in his heart, as no doubt every lover has done upon a similar occasion.

For the present, St. George betook himself home, with divided cogitations,—one half of his mind calculating the success of his sermon, the

other who the little man in black was, on whom Miss Pennington had leaned. He seemed a cleric, perhaps a curate, and St. George felt his feelings of jealousy redouble at the thoughts of being thwarted by one of his own class. Mr. O'Sing, perhaps; but, no, it could not be,—he would have been attracted and received elsewhere. All the firm resolutions of the preceding evening vanished; and he paced his apartment in anxious awaital of the hour at which he might, with propriety, repair to Ardenmore House to dinner.

It came at length; and his heart beat with anxiety at the approaching solution of his doubts. "Allow me, Mr. St. George," said Mr. Pennington, "to introduce you to the Reverend Sir Starcourt Gibbs." Here was the most fearful of all the *denouements* he had anticipated — the baronet, the very rival the Lowries had threatened him with; a gay, brisk, rosy, little, well-favoured person too, about the age of the mistress of his thoughts. St. George leaned against the back of a chair, alive only to the presence of Sir Starcourt; who, with his

hands in his pockets, kept both his feet and his tongue in continual motion, fidgeting about the room with the peevishness of a mercurial spirit, —accosting this guest, arguing with that, and joking with another at the same time. Bonaparte, Segur informs us, was in the daily habit of dictating to seven secretaries at once: Sir Starcourt could have done more, and argued with seven different people on different subjects all at the same time. To one he could denounce the diabolical projects of the Catholics throughout the kingdom, to another the never-failing excellence of his double-barrelled guns; to one side of him he could expatiate on the excellence of roan-hunters, whilst to the other he preached the worthlessness of womankind,—a favourite subject of his, by the bye. He multiplied himself amongst his fellows, and was ready not only to talk on every subject, but to interest himself, and get in a passion thereon. He was a living monopoly of argument, and passion and pretension—an union, in his small sphere, of the Villiers and the Shaftsbury of Dryden—being

"All in the course of one revolving moon,—
A sportsman, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon."

Whilst his diminutive person, contrasted with the mercurial and restless spirit that animated, made this answer to his,

"Whose else through the pigmy body work'd its way,
And o'er-informed its tenement of clay."

There were other points of resemblance between these factious courtiers of Charles' day and Sir Starcourt, who was no despicable partisan, if, indeed, he was not altogether and alone a party in himself. A man of rank and wealth, it is impossible to conceive what preposterous motive could have led him to choose the church as a profession, unless the general one, by which that Charibdis of Irish talent and ambition continues to swallow up three-fourths of the Irish population. For Ireland is, in fact, not a government, but a hierarchy. In the minds of all, anywise interested in passing events, the church is the predominant object of consideration; in society it is the pre-

vailing topic, which, in such society, never yields place but to b———, a word, fair readers, that for your sake I will not make legible. Of families, one half at least of the males are destined to a clerical life, and this from the noble to the shopkeeper; the streams, in fact, of all Irish interests, private and public, flow and centre in this *Black* Sea; and thousands are carried along with the current, the natural and unbiassed tendency of whose dispositions would have led them rather to be Buccaneers or demagogues, than ministers of the Gospel. Commerce, the staple pursuit of English life, is never thought of by that class of life that always turn their thoughts thither in England. If ten youths are met in an Irish crowd, of all ranks of life, nine of them, to a certainty, are going to be ordained. The consequence is, that in a few years there will be more pastors than sheep; and in the general press of all orders and dispositions into the ranks of the church, those pastors naturally can, many of them, be no better than they should be.

Whatever motive enlisted Sir Starcourt in

those ranks, certain it is, that he was there most grievously misplaced. His profession told him to be patient of injuries, and to love his neighbour as himself; but how fulfil this, when, by disposition, he was the most impatient man on earth; one, who to live, must necessarily hate? He that was formed to be the barking, biting terrier of newspaper or Parliament opposition; how was he to mope contented with the life of a listless and pampered house-dog? The thing was impossible. I need not say, that the course of his zeal directed itself against the Catholics; they were in fact, the fair and obvious objects of a churchman's spleen, and the most ample scope was here allowed for the zeal of partisanship. An Orangeman, a purpleman, consequently, Sir Starcourt became; into a comfortable state of frenzy he soon worked himself. And the only question remaining was, in what exact mode his zeal was to be exerted. He was above dragooning like our quondam friend, Mr. Crostwaite; and scorned to make himself a policeman, under the order of a Castle Secretary. He

chose another vent for his restless ambition. And this was, leaving their hackneyed ways of warfare,—the sword, the constabulary staff, and the pulpit, to his brethren, to write down the Catholics and their bigotry. It was an enterprise more bold than new, especially in one of extreme ignorance both as to the history of his country, and to religious controversy; still he had zeal and imagination, and resolved to supply every other want with these. It was very unlucky for him, that Sir Starcourt resided in a part of the kingdom most undisturbed by Catholic bigotry or persecution; his time being, for the most part, spent either in his princely villa near the metropolis, or at his living not far from Ardenmore.

It was not, consequently, from any facts that came under his own observation that he gathered the mighty hostility of the Catholics; his imagination here likewise supplied his pen. Every month he sent forth a fresh diatribe, more intemperate and frenetic than the foregoing, till at last this Orange Cobbett of Ireland, having exhausted argument, fell to prophecy as

a last resource, and poured forth such dreadful denunciations, amounting to such extravagance of horror and absurdity, that the better-tempered of the Catholics themselves began to gather up his pamphlets, which they bound as the "Revelations of Sir Starcourt Gibbs."

Such was the personage whom, by a romance-writer's privilege, I make the rival of St. George. He had been an old admirer of Miss Pennington, often rebuffing, often rebuffed, still hanging on, more from habit and an impossibility of fixing elsewhere than from positive affection. Still Miss Louisa had charms for him; she had a spirit, and could argue. Those rude, little mercurial personages always despise women, or affect to do so; Miss Pennington was the only one of her sex that Sir Starcourt respected.

There were more personages in the room than we can for the present afford time to give full-length portraits of; hence there were divers knots of conversation, with each of which Sir Starcourt continued to keep connexion, making himself a central point between all. Without interrupting any one of these links, he seized

the opportunity of an interval of silence to address St. George.

"Welcome to Ardenmore, brother chip!—how long have you been japanned?"

"I have been ordained a twelvemonth!"

"And are an Orangeman, no doubt?"

"No, truly!"

"That must not be said of a loyal priest. I'll introduce you to our Lodge, it meets every Saturday."

"Rather an inconvenient evening, I should think?"

"What! because it interferes with Sunday? Not it. We are all drunk and a-bed long before twelve."

As this assurance did not at all obviate St. George's objections, it was lucky for the future amity of the two clerics, that the baronet's attention was called away by a discussion on the subject of Hoenlohe's miracles, that absorbed his passion too much to permit him to pay attention to any other part of the conversation.

Thus liberated, St. George cast a furtive regard towards Miss Pennington, whom he ex-

pected to see all attention to his titled rival. To the curate's astonishment, delight, and dismay, the lady beckoned him to approach her, made room at her side, and began to converse in such blandness and such smiles, that St. George soon forgot every thought, except that of his being the object of a lovely woman's attentions. Miss Pennington expressed herself quite enchanted with our curate's pulpit discourse,—its eloquence, and the total absence of cant; which seemed, she said, so barren and unfructifying to the ladies of Laylands, that they had returned home in utter discomfiture. "They are amiable, good-hearted girls, the Lowries, nevertheless," added she, knowing how much this generosity would contrast in the eye of St. George with their malice, "and 'tis a pity that saintliness and O'Sing have made them so unsociable!"

Louisa Pennington had foreseen the dread and prejudice that a visit to Laylands would produce in the mind of St. George against her, but trusted to her affability and fascination as powerful antidotes. She was, therefore, not

astonished to find the regards of St. George avoid her, or turn to where she sate with suspicion and hesitation. Once, however, within the magic circle of her influence, every sinister idea faded from the curate's mind, and even the disinterested warning of Harry Lowrie ceased to occupy him.

During the course of the evening her attentions were directed towards St. George continually, to the great annoyance of the Baronet, who broke more than once upon their sentimental dialogue with an exclamation very nearly approaching an oath, if it was not one; accusing the curate, to his great confusion, of being "a monopolist, a persevering gallant, one who knew what he was about," with divers similar innuendoes, which St. George knew not how to parry; nor yet was he able to avoid them by abandoning the society of Miss Pennington.

That young lady, however, afforded her new acquaintance the full consolation of revenge, by making Sir Starcourt the object of her most contemptuous ridicule the moment that the restless Baronet was attracted elsewhere.

"Did you ever see such a brisk, dapper, talkative, vain little person as this?" said Miss Louisa to St. George, who assented to her malice with a smile; "he thinks all men should succumb to his arguments,—all women to his attractions. '*Ces nains pensent toujours qu'ils suffisent à tout.*' Have you never remarked the self-sufficiency that always accompanies low stature?"

St. George did not look for exceptions, which he might have recollected; but the remark at the moment was palateable, and he assented.

"I do so love to torment him!" continued the lady as in confidence, her eyes brightening with the delights of coquetry. St. George, calling to mind what he had heard, became evidently alarmed at the confession, in spite of the confidence with which he was treated. "It is the only species of vengeance we womenkind are allowed. Do you not think it, now, quite fair?"

The curate could, and, perhaps, would have replied in a full negative, if he had not been interrupted by the entrance of Harry Lowrie.

"Why so late, Harry?" said Mr. Penning-

ton; "we expected to have had your company to dinner?"

"What! feast abroad of a Sunday, Mr. Pennington?—'twere too great a trespass against the laws of Laylands; and that, too, in a victorious enemy's camp, on the very day of our defeat? I have taken an evening's ride merely to pay my *devoirs* to the ladies."

"The Holy Land, then, is in dolour?" said Miss Pennington.

"In deep dejection," replied Harry; "and the length of faces portended such a length of prayers, that I made my escape for the evening. Ha! Sir Starcourt."

"How are you, Harry Lowrie?" said the Baronet. "How do you and the fair Mary agree? The Saints, how do they tolerate such profane thoughts as marrying and giving in marriage?"

"They are much given to it," observed Miss Pennington, "though often with little success."

"And so your father has turned Methodist, Harry?" said the Baronet.

"Pardon me, Sir; only *New Light*."

"What's the difference, pray, except that this Light has not a lantern, in the shape of a meeting-house, built?"

"A vast deal," said Mr. Pennington. "This *New Light* counts amongst its worshippers not a few prelates, enjoying the wealth and eminence of the church,—an archi-episcopal palace is even said to be illumined by it. Would you have them sacrifice opulence and dignity to their new-fangled principles?—Not they—the age of martyrdom and sacrifice is past. They have no idea of detaching themselves from the church; but seek to drag the church to, and under them."

"Now, confusion upon their ill-timed Puritanism!" said the Baronet; "as if all orders of Protestants had not one common enemy in Catholicism, which it is all our duties to unite in order to knock on the head."

"Knock on the head?" interrupted Miss Pennington, "with your crook, I suppose, reverend shepherd; a most pastoral advice, truly."

But the Baronet was carried away by his

political enthusiasm, and was not to be diverted by a repartee.

"Those sanguinary Catholics," continued he, "that are every day plotting our destruction, and whetting their knives for our throats, to be permitted to lie in wait, unwatched, undreaded, and unopposed, in the midst of us, while we fall out and quarrel about trifles. A fatuity seems to possess us, and lay us open to destruction. They're quiet here, 'tis true,—but 'tis the quiet that precedes a storm; they are mining the very ground beneath our feet—the diabolic combustibles are ready to blow up—they are laying the train this very moment."

"The Lord have mercy upon us!" cried out both the Miss Penningtons simultaneously, so fearful and imminent seemed to be the peril threatened by the eloquence of the Baronet. But the seer would admit of no interruption of his second sight.

"The flaming torch will be put to every habitation in the land, from the cabin to the palace. Every Catholic is to slay the Pro-

testant dearest and most intimate to him—the servant his master, the son the father, the wife her husband. The flesh is to be stripped from the bones of the murdered, and ploughed into the land, in order to fertilize it for true believers! A sinner will have but to wash his hands in heretic blood in order to be forgiven. And a general jubilee is to celebrate our total extirpation from the land."

And further had the prophet sung; but that Miss Louisa, starting from the sofa where she sate stopping her ears with her fingers, transferred them to the keys of the piano, and beat forth the tune of St. Patrick's Day loud enough to drown the still kindling efforts of the baronet's soothsaying.

St. George was astonished by his cleric brother's Orange frenzy; which, since his interview with M^c^Dowd, he had begun to think extinct in the country. So, indeed, it was almost: the Orange Lodge spoken of by the Baronet consisting of no more than five members; who existed rather as amateurs, to preserve the memory of a forgotten art, than as active professors.

Reduced as it was, the knot, however, still met, to indulge in fearful dreams of massacre and conspiracy; and in a country completely peaceable, as far as Catholicism was concerned, the little band still sent forth its fumes of zeal and terror, like the smouldered crater of a volcano, sending forth signs of the flame that it had been wont to vomit forth, and which it still covered.

CHAPTER IV.

St. George was again raised to the Paradise of Fools. Miss Louisa might be coquettish —she evidently was—but could a woman of sense, talent, and beauty, like Miss Pennington, treat such lovers as the mad Baronet otherwise than with that mirth and those smiles, the insincerity of which she scarcely took the pains to conceal. To himself, St. George observed with self-complacency, her conduct had been different; kind, familiar, yet full of consideration. There must exist congeniality of feeling betwixt us, thought he, for from our first meeting a link of confidence and mutual understanding was established. And it was but natural: amongst country boors, uninformed country squires, and the shallow

beaux of marching regiments, how could such a superior being as Louisa Pennington find a suitor worthy of her, or a heart that would beat with ardour tender and refined as hers? That his own was capable of so feeling, nay, that his alone, amongst all that she had met, was so capable, the vanity of St. George was not backward in whispering.

To him, too, Miss Pennington seemed the only female, that had ever crossed his path, likely to appreciate and love him for those hidden qualities, that the student plumed himself upon possessing. Louisa was no giddy, trifling girl, to be captivated by a bold address, handsome person, or any of those external accomplishments, that he could not pretend to. She had, years he did not say, but sense enough to look for attractions more durable and solid, and at the same time more noble: so diffident indeed was Charles, and so certain was he of not possessing the gay, fascinating qualities of youth of the world, that the mature age of his mistress became to him her principal recommendation, as the sheet-anchor of his hopes. And we

know that the blemish of years once overlooked in a mistress by the eye of a lover, that very blemish becomes the loadstone that holds his affection ever after irrevocably fixed.

On her part, Louisa was considerably taken with St. George. Coquetry is seldom practised in downright and utter cold-heartedness—there is always a lingering possibility of its being turned to advantage. And Louisa, however selfish, and a woman of the world in the main, was not without her moments of sincerity, when flattered by possessing the affections of Charles; and subdued by the depth and feeling of his converse, she appreciated the value of those affections, and for the time felt corresponding feelings arise in her own breast. Accustomed, however, to trifle with her own heart, as well as with those of others, Louisa was incapable of persevering in serious sentiments, at least towards any except a commanding suitor: and St. George was far other than this. She possessed those fits of feeling, and that momentary sincerity, sufficient to deceive St. George into a belief of the warmth and truth of her heart; and his vanity led him to excuse the

coquetry that she practised upon beings, whom he ranked not with himself. When in each other's company, after a little time, the mutual betrayal (whether by words or signs) of attachment was sincere: but when St. George retired to meditate upon his chosen idol, to bless his fortune, imagine his future happiness, and enwrap himself in the conclusion, that Louisa was born for him, and he for Louisa; the said Louisa, alive, like all women, to the ridiculous, was contemplating the very considerable portion of that quality which she espied in the character and conduct of St. George. She was calculating, not the bliss of an union with him, but the position she should take in the world as his wife:—then comparisons arose—former lovers, not inferior, yet spurned; to contravene this pride, started up the number of her years; and straight ensued a conflict in her breast of a thousand petty feelings,—vanity, prudence, interest, liking, not love—that made her a prey to the torture of irresolution, without one noble or redeeming sentiment arising in a heart na-

turally formed to entertain such, had it not been frittered away for the gratification of her early vanity.

To such a minded enchantress did St. George become utterly enslaved. His life, till then, had seemed to him one uninterrupted journey, broken at least but by the necessary ruts and delays in life's road, until he seemed to quit at once his wonted ways, and lose all sight of them; he appeared to himself embarked, as it were, upon a summer sea, and to glide, as in unbroken dreams, towards some still undescried port. All his old ideas, studies, pursuits vanished from his consideration; they no longer occupied, fretted, or interested him: his plans were forsaken, his projects abandoned, and every faculty of his mind suspended, or diverted from its wonted tract. He laid down to dreams, and awoke to more vivid ones. His ideal world was altogether changed also, and his imagination began to scorn and turn from the scenes in which it had used to revel. It had formerly loved to soar, and to expatiate in strange scenes, to wander and lose itself,

"Lone musing by the shores of old romance,"

or in the fairy worlds of "Araby and Ind." Spenser used to have been his delight; the Arabian Nights, the verses of Scott and Southey, and latterly, as his reading extended, he felt inclined to engraft upon his imagination the metaphysical subtleties of the German poets and philosophers; and had even begun, by dint of contemplating them with the eye of microscopic criticism, to find their puerilities exquisite, and their absurdities sublime.

But, as the first spark of passion kindled within the breast of St. George, this taste, these ideas were dispelled. What had lately appeared exquisite, was now mawkish to him. Love invigorates the mind, and reinforms it, even to the faculty of taste, with a fresh infusion of manhood. Even the old imaginative poetry, in which he had delighted, appeared "flat." His fancy, formerly so discursive, was now recalled from its flights, and his far-spreading views, circumscribed, now centered in his own heart and its hopes. His thoughts grew

condensed, selfish, energetic, and he sought in kindred volumes sentiments that would echo his own. He no longer, in the hour that he allotted to lighter study, remained spell-bound over a canto of the Fairy Queen; and, cleric as he was, I am almost ashamed to confess, that it was over the pages of Byron and De Staël that he lingered longest, sympathising in the sorrows of Harold and Corinne.

From this mixture of suffering and enjoyment, our curate was aroused from time to time by the cares and duties of his sacred and by no means idle office, the labours and anxieties of which he had not anticipated. The common routine, however, of these duties did not disturb much the current of his thoughts:—religious duties, indeed, blend better than any more worldly ones with an anxious and heart-moved state of thought. But a trumpet of discord was at length sounded in the hitherto peaceful township of Ardenmore, that effectually disturbed the mental repose, not only of the curate, but of almost every inhabitant therein.

This was no other than a meeting of a Bible Society, convened in the said town. St. George heard of the circumstance with no dread of any bad consequences; on the contrary, he looked forward to it, as at once a proof of the religious feeling of the country, and as the means of extending this feeling amongst the poorer classes. But he soon began to obtain a glimpse of its probable consequences, after an evening's conversation with his friend Father M'Dowd.

"I 'm coming to take a friendly jug with you to-night, Mr. St. George," said the honest priest, "being as how it 's few more of the like we 'll ever be able to take by and by."

"I do not see what reason you can have for foreseeing that."

"Sure aren't your great ladies and saints going to take my business out of my hands, and to instruct my flock themselves?—And do you think we 'll bear that in peace?"

"You must mistake, Mr. M'Dowd."

"Not I, in troth! What else is all this parleying about, and collecting, and buying Bibles? It is not for themselves, sure, who can afford

to buy as many Scriptures as they please; nor can it be for the Protestant poor,—for one form would seat every labouring or poor man that frequents your church."

"But what harm can the present of a Bible do to one of your flock, Mr. M'Dowd?"

"What harm! whillaloo!— no, what good? is the question, when none of them know how to read."

"The young may be taught."

"No doubt: young Catholics may be taught to read in Protestant Bibles: and their parents and pastors are to be grateful and contented for this kindness? What gomerils they take us to be! That 's the way your big people are always treating us poor Irish:—They set us down as asses; lay their plans and proposals accordingly; and when, to their disappointment, they find us to be beasts of a little spirit, they cry out against us as nothing less than cute foxes and uncivilized wolves. Now, here we are, Mr. St. George, you and I, brother clargy, over our tumbler—suppose, for a moment, we had the upper hand here, as we had of ould,

and will again, please God! afore long (but ye needn't hear that), and that ye were the persecuted, suffered sect; suppose we took your children, kindly offered to instruct them, and then set them to learn their lessons out of the Bulls of his blessed holiness the Pope, and the Decrees of his Consistory, all as sacred to us and hateful to you, and the Protestant version and collection of the Scriptures is sacred to you and hateful to us,—what would you say to it? Isn't it like erecting a charity-house for young Jews, and then rearing them on pork? Would you bear it? I ask you. And would you not, had you the advising of us, bid us rather leave your children in ignorance, than force you to turn at last insurrectionists, rebels, and cut-throats, instead of being a peaceable, unreading, industrious set of men, going to their own place of worship? Isn't it as clear as the sup of *native* in my glass, Mr. St. George? Those Layland saints, and the O'Singites are just ructionizing the country with their societies and Bible talk. Not a Roman in the country bore ill-will to his neighbour Protestant for the last ten years;

but now ye'll be hearing another story. The first mention of this meeting has raised every drop of ill blood in Louth; and discontent, suspicion, and hatred fill the same hearts that were good-natured a week ago as myself. A change you must look to. I must not be even known to hold any sort of intimacy with you. War is declared; and I'll bet you any even sum of tenpennies, that afore a twelvemonth the country's a proclaimed one, with military and police, horse and foot, quartered upon it, and driving us to open rebellion; and all this, because a few ould maids ha' taken into their head to teach our spalpeens to read in the Bible!"

Whatever arguments St. George opposed to the anti-biblic prejudices of his companion, he had none whatever to offer against his predictions; and at length he could but join the priest in regrets for the state of warfare into which they were both unwillingly forced to enter.

"A proper idea," ejaculated the priest, inter-

rupting his libations, "to make a set of spalpeens wiser nor their own clargy!"

"Come," said St. George, "our lady missionaries have no intention of going so far as that, in instructing the young of your flock."

"I 'd like to know how they could go farther," cried McDowd, growing frank from his attentions to the cruise; "do you think I ever read the Scriptures, onless an odd bit and scrap here and there?"

St. George had conjectured as much upon a former occasion, when, in a religious argument with his brother divine, the latter had betrayed such an enormity of ignorance as to confound Moses with Jesus Christ! These sacred names I crave pardon for introducing into these pages; I should not have done so, but for the sake of recording a fact that once fell under my own observation. St. George at present thought it best to preserve for his companion the reserve that the latter threw off, and feigned not to have paid any attention to his confession. But McDowd persevered.

"Ay," said he, "sorrow a three chapters of it I ever troubled my head with; and not a worse priest or worse Roman am I for that. If all Christians had drawn their religion from the one, appointed, living cup, instead of separately going to the fountain, each for his draught, it would have been an united and happy world to this day."

If St. George was not altogether convinced of the bad effects of a perusal of the Scriptures on men's minds, he at least perfectly understood and appreciated the motives that led M'Dowd to oppose the initiation of his flock in religious mysteries. His liberality even suggested other inconveniences resulting from a too free dissemination of the naked Scriptures, more serious than those dreaded by the priest. He, however, did not indulge in argument; for which, indeed, M'Dowd was getting too deep—in the bottle. When left alone, at length, St. George pondered on the baneful effects that this *New Light* fanaticism was producing in the country, not only splitting the established church into sects, but awakening, by its intemperance, the dormant

spirit of its enemy—Catholicism, into fresh hostility and virulence. Still, how could he venture to unfold his reasons without falling under overwhelming obloquy?—how could he, with propriety, oppose the distribution of the Holy Scriptures? He was no magistrate, intrusted with preserving the peace of the country; he was but a private soldier in the church militant, and the impolicy of a war was not his concern;—he must necessarily confine himself to painful duty in the ranks. From these troublous cogitations his thoughts escaped to Louisa; with her, thought he, and a vicarage, in any country, save this, I would be content to let ambition slumber.

The momentous day at length, of which handbill and circular had been for weeks the dreadful note of preparation, arrived. Crowds, more of the curious than the zealous, were in attendance; and Light, both Old and New, for the former would not seem behind-hand in zeal, filled the spacious hall of assembly. Delegates from the Parent Society in the Metropolis had travelled down to the meeting, with speeches

ready made, to astound and bedazzle rustic ears: but this was bringing coals to Newcastle; for many amongst the Ardenmorites were as ambitious of holding forth and making use of this, their only field of display, as the Metropolitans were of missionarizing the godly assembly. What there was to say upon the subject may seem to the sterile imaginations of my readers difficult to divine, especially as there was but one opinion pervading the assembly, and the sole end of the meeting but for each comer to deposit his pound. But business, in any country, can never be gone through by congregated folk, unless some innocent pastime be united with it. In England, when people meet on matters of importance, they devour a dinner: in Ireland, they prefer speechifying; and never do the eloquent natives of the Island of Saints miss an opportunity for displaying their tropes, and "airing" their parts of speech.

As all the fair ladies of Ardenmore and its neighbourhood were present, in their best bibs and tuckers, to barter their half-crown subscription for oratory, it became a more nervous task

to address the assembly. Addressed, however, it was, blandly and figuratively, with no great intellectual expense on the part of the speaker, since he now made use of the same phrases and metaphors for the ninety-ninth time; and the orator poured forth his opinions in all the security and self-complacency of a dignitary in the pulpit, secure in the impossibility of being replied to. Here, however, our Biblican reckoned without his host.

There was a certain young personage in Ardenmore, the son of a petty shopkeeper therein, who, like all the Irish commonalty of to-day, had been to college: by the by, the only means left for distinguishing a genteelly educated youth in Ireland, is to keep him free and far from its vulgarized University. This young genius, in his college attire, instead of interesting himself, as he might have done, were he possessed of a spark of talent, in either the classic or scientific studies of the course, affected to scorn, on the contrary, such dry-stewing and book-worm blockheadism; he revelled in the nobler study of Philips's Specimen of Irish Eloquence,—the

whole of which volume he contrived to commit to memory in one year and five months; evincing how little his stomach was troubled with bile, when he could digest such a load of rich and suetty stuff. Fraught with this, and with the bright names and examples of Burke, Avonmore, Curran, Grattan, *et hoc genus omne*, in his mind's eye and body's mouth, Mr. Slater destined himself at once to the judge's and the Parliament bench. But where, in what school, to try his powers, had long been the subject of his solicitude. The Historical Society was extinct —Coachmakers' Hall and the Academies were, the one past, the other wholly seas over. A Bible Society, in his own native town, struck upon him as welcomed as a lottery prize. The glorious opportunity at length was offered; a portal flung wide open to his fame; in Ardenmore, too, before the envious eyes of his equals, and the amazed eyes of his superiors, to shew off his learning, eloquence, and action; —it was a piece of good fortune beyond his utmost hopes. He forgot that an orator, not more than a prophet, was seldom honoured in

his own country; and he determined at once on grasping at the opportunity of distinguishing himself. What time, how many similes and quires of paper it took him to concoct a speech, I cannot exactly determine; but a speech, certainly, a flowery and a fine one, he did concoct for the occasion. And with this, crammed both into his memory and poke, had Master Cornelius Slater hurried down to Ardenmore on the very same coach-top with the Bible missionaries.

Not dreaming of any debate or difference of opinion that could possibly ensue, these gentlemen had oratorized their brief hour in their own figurative and slovenly style, when Master Slater arose, and commenced in a very eloquent and alarming exordium, to beg leave to differ with them on divers minor points. As Mr. Slater's dissent arose from the dire necessity of having some new argument and matter to advance, and nothing more, the youth neither knew nor cared whither his eloquence tended, or what it overturned: he had given his imagination *carte blanche* to find him a speech, without any scruples as to sides or parties. And

when he put his tongue and arms in motion for the delivery of this *philip*pic, he found himself, to his own and the assembly's astonishment, indulging in most flowery and extravagant indignation at the diabolical conspiracy and nefarious attempt to give Bibles to the poor.

"I, for my part, Mr. President," said Master Slater, winding up a fairish sort of tirade, "shudder, and am shocked at the idea of trusting the naked Scriptures to the peasantry;—'tis like trusting a sword without a scabbard into the hands of an ignorant savage, who is sure to grasp the blade and cut his fingers, instead of laying hold upon the hilt, and using the weapon as a safeguard and defence!" — here a pause for applause; but there was none in Ardenmore for poor Slater. This irritated the orator. He had intended this show of opposition to be nothing but a digression; and his purpose was to rally, in conclusion, to the Bible side of the question, and by that means allow himself to enumerate the acts and benefits of the Society to foreign countries, which would thus lead his harangue an agreeable tour round the four

quarters of the globe—" the sandy Afric,"—" the palmy Asia," and the untrodden regions of the New World. All this was written in the bond; but, alas! the orator had wandered from his track; he had been betrayed into warmth; and he laboured in vain to get back to the right side of the question for a long time. The regards of contempt, the cold refusal of the least applause, nettled the embryo advocate, and he resolved to abide and conclude in the opposition into which his eloquence had led him. " Of old," continued he, " when supplicants asked for bread, they were given a stone; and now, when the poor ask for oatmeal and potatoes, we kind-hearted folk present them with a new Bible; the sole consequence of which is, not the extension of religion, but that pawnbrokers' shops are glutted with those cheap editions of the Scriptures; for in those sinks your charitable subscriptions are sure, in a little time, to settle. Bibles, indeed!—find Bibles for a starving poor! labouring each at sixpence a-day! Charity, says the proverb, begins at home; but even when it goes abroad, it should

observe the principle, and begin with the stomach, before it catered for the head. And with all deference to this assemblage, I, for one," concluded the orator, "had rather see Potatoe Societies established throughout the kingdom for feeding the poor, than Bible Societies to convert us all into Puritans, Presbyterians, and New Light."

The clamour that arose in the assembly upon these words, may be conceived. An harangue against the Bible might be listened to,—there was nothing personal in it; but Puritans and New Light were venturesome expressions, looked upon as little less than treason by one half of the assemblage. The Miss Lowries, like damsels in feudal times, dependent on the prowess of some gallant knight, overlooked the lists, and saw no champion of their cause. The doughty O'Sing was exiled, never so much regretted as at present; the very tears filled Jemima's eyes at the thought of how her beloved ecclesiastic would have triumphed over the profane Slater. The regards of the New Light party were all turned upon St. George,

expecting that he would take up the gauntlet that had been flung down; but our curate appeared quite an uninterested spectator of the debate; and was, moreover, inclined to think, at times, that Slater spoke something like sense.

Old Light burned bright in the eyes of the votaries at this unexpected turn given to the meeting, and honoured the young orator for his peroration, although they dared not openly to applaud it. St. George only lamented that he seemed ignorant of, and consequently had not touched upon, the most serious objection to Bible dissemination and proselytism, which was, the certainty that it would disturb the peace of the country. Other orators, in the mean time, succeeded Slater; but as their speeches had been all prepared beforehand, and as no opposition of the kind could possibly have been foreseen, his dissentient arguments were overlooked and left completely unanswered. The youth himself was not proof against such contempt; he shook the Ardenmore dust from his brogues as he departed, vowed that neither Louth nor Ireland was the place for talent,

and emigrated at once to London; where, through the kind patronage of Sir Richard Philips, he has flourished ever since, equally with any potted geranium on the south side of Ludgate Hill.

So much for Master Cornelius Slater. The Bible Society of Ardenmore went on its way, in despite of his vigorous protests. Meetings were convened as usual, speeches made, cash subscribed, and Bibles were to be had for asking, and often not to be refused without asking, at Laylands and other mansions equally ghostly. Miss Jemima, on the strength of her scriptural store, and *pour passer le tems* in the absence of O'Sing, set up a school for all the brats on her father's domain. And the peasant that refused to send his children to Miss Jemima's instruction, was sure to be visited by vengeance in a thousand shapes; his rent was inexorably demanded to the day, a ridge for his potatoes refused the wretch, and even the bottle of buttermilk on churning-days, with which he and his family were accustomed to wash down their dry and unsubstantial meal, was withheld.

CHAPTER V.

"May all the curses of Ireland" (and those are not a few) "light upon Miss Jemmy!" became the cry of the country around Laylands. Every cabin was distracted and torn asunder by the struggle between lords spiritual and temporal of the peasant. Miss Lowrie demanded his children, that she might teach them to spell; and McDowd, having examined the said children, and convinced himself that saintly teachers could not instruct without infusing in their lessons some portion of the religious sentiments that occupied them, was compelled in his turn to fulminate all the anathemas of his church against those parents of his flock that consented to deliver their offspring to the snares of heresy, spread for

them by the ladies of Laylands. The contest afforded but amusement and excitement, perhaps, to the Lowries and McDowd; but, like the fable of the frogs, though play to them, it was death to the poor cottiers, who bore all the punishment and privation. That the priest conquered finally there is no need of my asserting; of the two species of despotism under which the poor of Ireland crouch, that of the landlords and that of the priests, the former, in the case of a struggle, always yields to the latter. A contested election in a county is the grand proof: the puissant bashaw of a landlord, all powerful in seeming at other times, because the priests are an humbly-behaved race of men, finds all his authority dwindle and pass unregarded, if opposed by the whisper of the Catholic clergyman. This power of the Romish clergy is greatly cried out against, not only as a nuisance of the first order, but as a proof of the bigoted and uncivilized state of the lower Irish. For my part, I think the influence of any pastor over his flock natural and necessary; and this devotion with which the Catholic

peasantry are always ready to sacrifice their comfort and worldly interest to the dictates of their minister, speaks more than any other trait recorded of them, in favour of their disinterestedness and honourable adherence to the only sort of principle they can understand.

The benches of Miss Lowrie's school-house were consequently left deserted by Catholic varlets. The lady, however saintly, would not forego her vengeance; and the consequence of her benevolent exertions was, that the peasantry were reduced, by petty and continual vexation, to even a greater state of misery than that in which they were generally accustomed and contented to live. The whole family of Laylands began to be held in detestation throughout the country;—there was no longer any love for the 'squire, or respect for his property; and in the ways of trespassing, idling, and purloining, the vexations inflicted on the peasants by the family were returned tenfold on the head of Mr. Lowrie. In the short space of a month Gervas Lowrie, Esq. found himself at law with almost every tenant he had; not unfrequently foiled, and

even when successful, he found both his rent and costs paid by the key of the tenant's cabin being left under his door, after a general decampment of the poor family;—whilst other tenants were not to be had, unless those of such bad character as would grasp at any thing. Owing to a succession of these circumstances, the saintliness of Laylands quite lost its good temper, and the progress of Puritanism, owing to these crosses, both in the habits and countenances of the mansion, became truly petrifying. In vain the uninfected Harry pointed out to his father the true cause of all these troubles, that had never before started up—in vain he urged a change of conduct, from policy at least, if not from conviction; the saints scorned to retrocede, and Harry was exclaimed against by his sisters as a renegade, who had deserted his paternal banners to join the profane ones of Ardenmore-House.

In despite of his moderation, St. George could not help being somewhat concerned and immingled in these contentions. He had ventured to visit Laylands, and had joined his voice of

dissuasion with that of Harry Lowrie; but the advice of the young minister was treated as the height of impertinence, and the curate was thenceforward on no terms of amity whatsoever with the votaries of New Light.

For this privation his increasing intimacy at Ardenmore House no doubt repaid St. George. With the presence or intrusion of Sir Starcourt he was not often troubled; and even when so, his trouble was soon after allayed by the freedom with which the person and peculiarities of the Baronet were afterwards treated by the young ladies. These darts of satire against the absent no doubt struck our curate with the possibility of similar remarks being uttered respecting himself; but this was a passing thought, on which his vanity did not allow him long to dwell. Louisa was to him all that his heart could wish, —confident, serious, warm, enthusiastic; and if she had the art, in the mazes of ardent and passionate conversation, always to divert her admirer from putting her sentiments to the test, and bringing his feelings of devotion towards her to a termination favourable or unfavourable, the

address with which this was avoided by the lady was unperceived by the gentleman, who attributed it to his own backwardness; and with the delicious content of first affection, in the progress and consciousness of its feelings, did not feel the impatience that always accompanies later and more artificial impulses of the same passion.

There is nothing more flattering and more delighting to a woman at once of sense and feeling, than to captivate a superior intellect inferior to her in years. The difference of ages is a guarantee against their being enslaved or looked down upon, as would be the case in a connexion with such a mind, on the same level with theirs as to years. In the former case, the one is flattered by the condescendent affection of one older; while the other is charmed by the devotions of at once a younger and a superior mind. If the lover do not awake subsequently to worldliness, or the mistress be not unable to preserve her reverence, as well as love, few connexions are more lasting or more happy than between such. Marriage certainly will go very far to dissolve the charm, although even against

marriage, it is proof most often; but, if Platonic love ever existed, it must have been between persons situated similarly as I have described them.

Charles St. George and Louisa Pennington felt this mutual charm. The weaker sex can scarcely appreciate the power of a mind their superior in years—if they comprehend, they are in awe of such. Superior to man in gleaning knowledge from experience, as they are inferior to him in gaining it by intuition, they descry all that is beneath them in the ascent of life, whilst their views do not stretch forward. Thus the enthusiasm of St. George, the ardent feeling that always accompanies talent, the original, wide, and at once amiable view that he took of every object, were none of them lost upon Miss Pennington: whilst the almost infantine simplicity of his heart, joined with the consideration of his youth, divested the feelings, with which she regarded him, of any of that awe and suspicion, which in other cases would be natural to them. Charles, on the other hand, looked up to Louisa,—a kind of tutelar, as well as wor-

shipped deity. His was a mind, to which, in order to love an object, it is necessary to revere it; and a mere girl he could not have viewed in this light. His was not the robust and sturdy spirit, capable of conveying, without needing to receive support;—on the contrary, his was more the tendril to cling, than the female heart he at the moment wooed. Louisa's person, character, and years, answered to all these cravings, and the student was so far wise in offering up his affections at her shrine.

Had the heart of Louisa been even untouched by the affection of St. George, she could not have treated him with other than the kindness which a lover so naturally interprets in his favour. To punish his sensitiveness by the laugh outright, that often met the bold pretensions of Sir Starcourt, would have been a cruelty impossible to commit. And it is often thus that gentle suitors win their way: cruel to rebuff, it becomes necessary to tolerate them, and woman always falls a victim in the end to these half-measures. But Louisa could not be in this predicament, as her coquetry had at first

attracted St. George, and the demand upon her forbearance was imperative, even if she were not in the least smitten. She was so, however, at times to a desperate degree, if her fickle heart had not rallied at others, and gone on calculating and coqueting as before.

As the studious habits and monastic life that St. George had always led, prevented him from joining in the country sports of either hunting or shooting, the abstaining from which on his part now, however, could not restore him to the good graces of the New Light, he was enabled to devote more time and attention to the ladies of Ardenmore House. Whilst Harry Lowrie and Mr. Pennington himself consumed the day in the active exercise of the chase, the curate, on his ambling nag, was exploring the beauties of the County Louth, or rather of the neighbouring County Meath,—solitary at times, and lost in meditation at others: almost as pensive and as lost when the Miss Penningtons accompanied his side.

There is much fertility, I believe, but little picturesque beauty in the County Louth, which

extends flatly, almost on a level with the ocean that bounds it, except towards the north, where it rises into a dark and stupendous chain of mountains, well entitled the boundary of the Black North. These, seen from the low-lying grounds of Louth, serve to relieve its monotony. 'Tis grand indeed to watch the dark, naked side of the mountain, all rock, unclothed, except at the very base, by any wood, basking in the sunshine, yet gloomy and refusing to be gay; while the flitting shadows of the similarly, flitting clouds seem to traverse, like some huge animal, the mountain side. Beyond this gloomy barrier lies the lovely bay of Carlingford and Rostrevor, one of the most beautiful and picturesque scenes in Ireland; and thither more than once were the steps of our hero and his fair guides directed. At other times, he explored the elysiums that wealth and taste have created out of scenery, naturally capable of picturesque improvement, at Collen and at Slane; and the veteran statesman, to whom introduction allowed St. George to present himself, at the former

place, formed to a mind like that of St. George the noblest attraction of a noble scene.

During those excursions with his fair companions, Charles St. George could not but, at times, give utterance to the feelings, that such idly and sweetly-spent time, and such society inspired him with. Louisa Pennington too, whose selfish character seldom predominated, unless when she was alone and abandoned to herself, was not proof against the tender enthusiasm of her admirer, so easily communicable to the female heart. For the present moment always sincere, because she really felt, she did not refuse to sympathize for the time in his ardour and romance; and whenever the imagination of St. George kindled and became eloquent, it was never met by any of that coldness on the part of Louisa, which she would have evinced, had she, who must have known herself, been conscientious. For those bursts that were in him but the overflowings of a during passion, were in her but capricious fits of excitement. In her conduct there appeared,

to our simple curate at least, no salutary index of this fact; and when the eyes of Louisa brightened, from having momentarily caught a portion of his enthusiasm, to St. George this appeared the scintillation of the self-same flame that filled his own breast.

Independent of the effect produced by the conversation of St. George, all with Louisa depended upon circumstance and whim: had she been employed in perusing a passionate novel, or work of imagination; had she lately heard the impressive voice of St. George subdue from the pulpit the feelings of an assembled congregation, he was then her hero for the time, truly and unrivalled. But had she been in the gay world, her thoughts still filled with its malicious and petty tattle, then would some gay officer, some more conspicuous man of the world supersede the modest curate in her breast. While often on race-courses, and other assemblies of country gentlemen, around table or at field sport, Sir Starcourt Gibbs even without the glittering appendage of his title, rose high in her estimation above his more inactive rival.

Often the conclusion of her closet thoughts was a determination to torment Sir Starcourt no more, to sooth and win him back, and yield with a good grace to the first renewal of his addresses. But the Baronet, for some reason or other, dreaded this as a deep-laid snare for a deadly rebuff, and stood off warily, until he provoked his mistress into a resumption of her old habits of tormenting and coquetry. St. George was the real sufferer throughout these variations; for, in comparison with the sufferings of such a mind as his, those of all around him were but pastime. Their uncertainties and hesitations were but petty struggles between caprice and self, with a mean charm in the exercise of cunning and calculation:—his doubts were a suspension of hope and peace, and almost of existence.

Louisa could not but perceive the extreme sensitiveness of her present victim: and so different did St. George seem at times from all his fellows, that she had ever known; so unamenable seemed his impressions and conduct to the common rules of life, that she at times

was terrified at the probable consequences of her coquetry. She had never previously felt compunction in a similar case; but on St. George, so wonderful seemed the effect of her slightest word or action, so elating her smile, so depressing her seriousness even, that a kind of sympathy and uneasy feeling of pity for him began to enthrall Louisa almost as much, as a highly-wrought-up love for her had enslaved Charles. Great as was her natural acuteness and penetration, both as one of the more observant sex, and as a woman of mature experience, Louisa was every moment baffled and surprised by the joy and gloom that alternately lit up or clouded the young curate's brow, both unaccountable to her. After a serious converse, in the course of which Louisa had constrained herself to check the hopes of the youth, or damp his ardour, she would perhaps see him the next time meet her with an expression of more than usual contentment. Whilst, perhaps, after an evening's gay amusement and unchecked familiarity, the countenance of St. George would appear the next morning clouded

with regret and anguish, evident, as if, upon the previous evening, his feelings had been outraged, and his hopes utterly overthrown.

To account for this it may be said, that St. George, like many people of his studious and contemplative cast, possessed at once a perception most inattentive to what was passing round him at the time, and a memory most fearfully retentive of the smallest occurrences in society or particulars of conversation. Those heard or seen at the moment never then excited his suspicion ; but when he retired, and reviewed all with a scrupulosity, heightened at once by vanity and love, the most trivial expression, the most unmeaning trifle was then sufficient to rack his mind with torture. Hours of solitude would he thus spend recollecting, interpreting looks, and drawing meanings, spun to impalpable tenuity from the haphazard remarks of the associates from whom he had parted. It is thus that beings, not early conversant with society, become self-tormentors upon entering into it late ; are driven back into the retreat of misanthropy, owing to early unsocial habits, and

often die man-haters, with nevertheless the most social tendencies, and with hearts that, in reality, have need to repose on those of their brother men.

This minute attention to every pin-wound received, or fancied to be received, by his vanity, certainly proceeded in a great measure from St. George's want of more serious and worthy occupation. But he had become incapable of such; his mind had not the vigour capable of grasping or attending to any pursuit; the habits of study, and the clues of studious thought, were both utterly lost; and our curate's brain was, in short, at sea without a compass, abandoning itself to the winds and waves of dreaming reverie, or endeavouring to steer itself by the beautiful but indistinct starlight of love.

How strange is woman's heart! All the personal and intellectual charms of our hero had not the effect or influence upon that of Louisa, as this capricious fretfulness, this moody and unaccountable behaviour of his towards her. She, who would have despised his un-

ceasing and continued sighs, his tone of plaintiveness, and even his pining look, felt interested, piqued, worried, and subdued by this varying temper. At times it was pity that caused her to mark and endeavour to remove his chagrin;—at times an interval of real affection;—now it was pique;—and latterly, more often a feeling of hurt vanity, lest in a quarrel, seemingly begun on his part, she might pass more for the deserted than the deserter. For St. George, from pride as well as from natural timidity, kept sounding ever as he neared the shore, and seemed to dread more a denial, on the part of his mistress, than the actual failure of his hopes.

Louisa was here caught somewhat in her own net; and St. George, in the midst of all his suffering and absorption, had penetration to perceive this, and self-complacency enough to utter the observation to himself; especially when, after a tacit pique between them, she was the first to make advances;—which was at times the case, from one or other of the causes above enumerated. But although to a su-

perficial observer, or to so interested a one as the lover himself, the lady might seem as deep in the snare as her lover, there was still this fundamental difference, that in case of a breach, Louisa's vanity safe, she would be visited by no regret; whereas St. George, whose whole hopes, with all the force of imagination impelling them, were in the cast, might slightly feel the shock in his vanity, but in heart irrecoverably.

Were the progress and varying degrees of this attachment to be described minutely, and illustrated by accounts of the thousand tiffs, coolnesses, quarrels, bickerings, and reconciliations, that formed the link of its chain, this would be indeed then, if it were not already such, a most wearisome chronicle. But one of these dire visitations of ill fortune, that so universally befall lovers, may be recounted.

The reader must have remarked that happy regulation of our military establishments, which ordains to marching regiments a life of perpetual migrations, most favourable, be it said, to sudden smitings of passion, to kindlings of

mutual affection, to vows and separations, to troths, and (though rarely) hearts cruelly broken; in short, to the metamorphose of moving sons of Mars and stationary maidens into the heroes and heroines of private life. It is to be doubted, if the forcible entry of the *forlorn hope* at the breach of a besieged town, be more appalling to the hearts of the inhabitants of the said town, than is the gay entry of a detachment, drum and trumpet sounding, into a peaceful town of their native country. The hearts of maidens no doubt rejoice—all—even the betrothed; for when does the last idea of coquetry utterly forsake the breast of woman? But woe to the swains, however secure before! their hearts knock at their throats with terror at this invasion; and the burgher beau, that in the morning donned his beaver in all the carelessness of confidence, now smoothed his chin, brushed his cuff, and raised his collar, with most nervous doubt as to the killingness of his personal appearance.

I will not say these were the actions of St. George, but certainly his feelings were not

very dissimilar, when, one peaceable, no-market-day, the spruce Captain Snobbs, with his gay subalterns, Lieutenants Nobbs and Obbs, marched into Ardenmore, at the head of a company of the —th foot. Not a female eye in the town could refrain from scanning the manly heroes as they marched in, with military pomp; and all Ardenmore was in busy inquiry and communication for an hour, until every soul, even to the scullions in each kitchen, had become possessed of the name, rank, and complexion of the late importation of his Majesty's troops. Each enquirer curious, according to her rank; — the pretty shopkeeper's daughter, for example, eyeing the epauletted gentry, and the said scullion uplooking to the summit of the baggage-carts, to observe if the company at large was fully provided with wives.

St. George, with the prophetic eye of a lover, instantly foresaw that he should meet Captain Snobbs, &c. at Ardenmore House, and the consequence of this to his own peace of mind he foresaw at the same time. Nor was he mistaken;—for the very first time that he entered

after this the drawing-room of Mr. Pennington, he met there the identical captain. No gentleman can be agreeable as a rival; a gentleman in a red coat of all others. Accordingly, our curate devoted the captain to his most magnanimous hatred and contempt; and the captain was not behind-hand in entertaining a reciprocal feeling. This came quite natural to the soldier, whose universal maxim, nay, whose very essence is to suppose no man his equal. In his regiment he sees none except superiors or inferiors, and the regiment is his world;—accordingly, your true *militaire* never looks straight at you—his regards must be either up or down, *de haut en bas*, or *de bas en haut*;—he divides society with a line, that line himself,—and his great anxiety is to range the company on either side of this line, that he may, for the future, treat each according to the proper and prescribed notions of his beloved etiquette.

There was no trait so very striking in the character, conversation, or existence of Captain Snobbs, that I should dwell upon him. He

paid equal attentions to Miss Pennington and to his dinner; and after the disappearance of both of these seemingly-interesting objects, the captain picked his teeth, threw his silk pocket handkerchief across his knees, and said nothing; ending his evening's campaign by turning music and handing chairs for the ladies.

One should think that in all this there was little cause for inspiring our friend St. George with jealousy. But the less cause was evident, the more did he suspect was latent: —jealous he would be, and he was; and all the sisterly kindnesses of Miss Mary Pennington could not allay his ferocity. This he displayed more than once in attempts to draw the captain into an argument on any given subject, in the course of which, he hoped to vanquish and expose him. But the curate was disappointed; it being a rule with the soldier never to argue in any place where he could not swear, an oath being the most potent syllogism with which he was acquainted.

It was strange that St. George, who had never taken umbrage at the attention of Sir

Starcourt Gibbs, should here fly out into resentment at a conduct less marked on the part of Captain Snobbs; but we always tolerate the rivals that precede us, and look with an ireful eye only upon suitors, later than ourselves in putting in their claims. Louisa did not fail to perceive this quarrel-provoking pettishness on the part of St. George; and thenceforth indulged his spleen with all the petty causes that her conduct could afford. Our hero retired, in both fury and tears of resentment, from Ardenmore House, and resolved never to enter it more; thus wilfully flinging from him the hopes that he most prized, and for a cause more trivial than many, in the observation of which those very hopes had grown. But the heart delights in those hasty sacrifices, so momentary, though so vowedly irrevocable; and love is fond of holding for an experimental moment to its lips the cup of despair.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE is a pleasure in quarrelling, that none but the piqued lover knows, and which it would be an idle attempt to explain. Fancy has generally ere then exhausted the store of hope, and hath run over the fair side of the question, till not one new source of happiness is left to imagine;—it then, perforce, turns the canvass, and having spent all its gay colours on one side, it delights to employ its untouched stock of lugubrious ones upon the reverse. If a lover's hope be supreme bliss, a lover's despair is not without its soothing and flattering accompaniments,—so that, on the whole, perhaps he is not vastly to be pitied; at least when his despair, as at present was the case with St. George, is voluntary and prepense, and very likely to

give place to more cheering thoughts, as soon as the new gloss of its melancholy has worn off, and the power of the pride that supported it has subsided. In fact, the three days of ire and grief which St.George fretted and raved through after his abrupt secession from Ardenmore House, were no such intolerable state of existence ;—his alternate fits of resentment and regret were each sublime in their way ; quite a new compartment in the human heart was disclosed to his curious eye ; a new pulse of passion to his muse ; and the philosophic lover consoled himself for the little progress he made in the conquest of his mistress's heart, by the considerable advance that he made in fathoming his own.

The fourth day passed, and no tidings from the house ; no conciliatory message from Louisa. Then, indeed, his thoughts began to grow irksome. The bitterest of love's pangs is, perhaps, simply this — that it makes us extremely idle, and thus exposes us to the extreme paroxysms of *ennui ;* and under this malady our curate began to suffer horribly on the fifth and sixth

days of his dudgeon. Still his pride and pet were not yet down to zero, and he very magnanimously and philosophically resolved to seek amusement and distraction elsewhere than in Ardenmore House.

On this hint from within, St. George began to consider the extreme impropriety of his seclusion from his flock, of his apathy towards them; and he thus awakened himself to a sense of the duty, that prescribed for the minister of the gospel, to mingle with the flock under his care, and become familiar with them, so that his ghostly advice might be offered opportunely and with effect; and that he might acquire that salutary influence over all orders of his parishioners, that an active discharge of the duties of his sacred office demanded. Strange, that a pious curate should be reminded by a love-pique of his duty; but foreign motives of this kind are often most efficient in spurring the best of us to exertion.

Pursuant to his resolution, from whatever motive formed, his first act was to extend his discoveries amongst that more careless order

of the higher ranks, which had hitherto kept aloof from the parson, as St. George had kept retired from them. To this end, with a spirit new to him, he wrote to accept the often pressed offer of Harry Lowrie, and crave its fulfilment in the loan of a hunter for the ensuing morn. Harry failed not to send the steed in return; and our curate, determined to be no longer the retired and noiseless personage he had hitherto been, prepared to make his debut in the sporting world as gallantly as possible. How much he was wound up to this pitch of audacity so unnatural to him, by the idea of having, as he flattered himself, possessed, or touched at least, the heart of a woman; or whether it was his new ideas of *duty* that emboldened him, I cannot determine; or, perhaps, such, alas! is the littleness of lover's motives, he did it with the view that his *nonchalance* and Nimrodic manhood might reach the ears of, as he again flattered himself, the pining Louisa.

On the next morn St. George rode forth from Ardenmore, equipped for the chase; and, although it was no extraordinary sight in the

county Louth to see black frocks in pursuit of four-legged vermin, on the contrary, rather extraordinary not to see them so employed, yet the few New Light townsfolk of Ardenmore, that happened to be awake at that early hour, spread the news in horror of the profane act of him who so unworthily filled the chair of O'Sing.

In the field St. George was otherwise greeted. A full view of Reynard himself at the moment would not have caused more delight amongst the jovial huntsmen, than thus to perceive their new and much venerated minister amongst them; and a general shout was raised in honour of his orthodoxy. Here commenced St. George's so much sought observation. He had looked upon the noble amusement of the chase as altogether confined to the nabobs of the county and their families,—to the aristocracy, in fact; and so it had been in the good old times of distinction. But around him was a crowd and a medley of personages whom he had not dreamed of meeting. He saw not only the gentry, but the demi-gentry—squire and farmer; but, in addi-

tion to these, the very dregs and commonalty of the town: a broad-shouldered dancing-master was there, as well mounted as the owner of the pack; horse-venders and pig-venders, clerks, coroners, and apothecaries' boys; every vagabond seemed enabled to find a garron for the day, and to partake in the noble pastime. This shocked our curate; for the retired, however conversant with republican theories, are, from habit, aristocratic in feeling—the *odi profanum* the motto of every study, — ay, though it were Bentham's.

But all this squeamishness was soon lost in the excitement of the chase. Reynard sprung forth, as the hounds and the view-hollo witnessed, and led his pursuers over the flat, though undulating extent of the county Meath, the hillocky and far-spread distance of which is accustomed to assume to the eye the appearance of an ocean-horizon rolling in a sullen and unbreaking swell. Sing of sentiments as you will, poet of passion, there is none that either heart or head can inspire so glorious and exciting as that communicated by the speed of a courser

pursuing a contemptible animal and a few howling dogs :—so much *en passant* for the sublimity of our feelings! St. George, to his surprise, experienced this buoyant feeling of mock heroism in the pursuit, more exhilarating than all the "drowsy siraps," that ever made the brain of De Quincy to teem with images, (a useless excitement, one should think, to a brain so fertile.) Why, even love, thought he, is nothing compared with this;—the image of Louisa herself, withering as the frowns of scorn could make her, would have been powerless in abating the ardour of a fox-chase.

St. George thought till this moment that he had been a churchman born; but this he began to doubt of much; and, in truth, so did Harry Lowrie, as he saw one of his favourite hunters urged to the top of her speed by the clerical Nimrod, whom he could not have suspected of such eagerness. "Bravo, parson!—bravo, doctor!—bravo, dominie!" echoed on all sides, as the curate, to the great delight of himself and steed, though economizing the strength of neither, swept along almost amongst the dogs,

the very foremost of the fray. He was horseman enough, however, to hold on; besides, the excitement gave him confidence, and confidence security, for the same reason that so many venturesome feats are performed with perfect safety in sleep. Luckily for St. George's triumph, which at this speed could not have continued long, old Reynard could not make a vigorous or prolonged flight: he had been hunted perhaps often and late; and his hour was come. He made battle an instant amongst the noisy pack, but was soon past cavilling. St. George was in at the death; and our curate found himself, to his own astonishment, the hero of the sporting day.

It is an old observation, that we are most greedy of, and gratified by, applause for achievements most foreign to our character, and when we are least fitted for success. So was it with the student, who plumed himself considerably at the moment upon his fox-hunting abilities. To refuse to conclude the day in the same company, with which it had been so gloriously spent, was impossible. Besides, a knowledge of such

company had been his original aim, and the reins of his fagged steed were in consequence turned in the direction of the hospitable abode of the owner of the pack. Being more one of a species, than with any individuality about him, I may refrain from printing this jovial soul's "name and habitation."

Behold, then, our curate, whose experience had hitherto been confined to the retired samples of Old and New Light at Ardenmore and Laylands — behold him embarked in a company of sportsmen and good fellows, the *staple* population of the higher orders of the country. Amongst them St. George recognized Sir Starcourt, who welcomed him with a most cordial shake of the hand to this true view of divinity; and the salute was returned as cordially by St. George, who for some hidden reason felt his wonted antipathy to the Baronet vanish from amongst his prejudices. Eating and drinking was, of course, the order of the evening:—the world in general is a regular world at its meals; and I trust that my readers, if they find it exceedingly monotonous and dull in me to have

dined in every chapter, as, I fear, is the case, will remember, that bread, beef, and mutton, can never grow insipid; and that they will extend to the imagination of the author the same privileges that they must allow to their own larders.

During the clatter of knives and forks, all that St. George could gather respecting his sporting companions were their names; and even here there was not always distinction, there being half-a-score of Fortescues, and other names, as noble and extended. But as soon as each visage became reflected on the mahogany, and lit up, like a transparency, with the genial flame of Bacchus from within, then did he begin his task of observation. Sporting was the natural and pervading topic of converse, in the science of which poor St. George was as backward as he had been forward in the practice. But insipid as he thought its discussion and long-winded vaunts, he thought the theme a noble one in comparison with the more gross vein, into which, as to their proper level, the most part of the talkers afterwards sunk. It

was a prime minister of Great Britain, we believe, that made it a rule never to introduce any other subject at his table than—licentiousness: "Every one," observed he, "is equally at home there." And truly the conversational maxim, like other English importations, has flourished to an unexampled degree in the Green Isle.

This mine of inexhaustible wit was worked incessantly by a knot of old fellows at one corner of the table, from whence any exuberance of good things of the kind was sure for a few moments to overflow and smother every other topic of discourse; and even those who were licensed to "hang fire," and look grave at real jokes, were shewn no mercy, if they refused a laugh to these. Graver members fell upon county interests and agricultural prospects; the younger argued the merits of the choice hunters and choice lasses of the country, in much the same terms;—in short, "a damned fine girl danced the whole night, and never turned a hair," was the eulogium pronounced on the most peerless beauty of the county. In the midst of all these, whether "gaieties or gravi-

ties," St. George felt awkward, both as a cleric and an ignorant; and he began to recall with speed the favourable ideas that he had formed of a sporting life, at least as suited to him. He began to think it was even better to act a quiet, unpretending part, at Ardenmore-House, than act the Nimrod and the jovial fellow, even for the sake of the observation and knowledge of his parishioners, and the advantage and necessity of which he had so vaunted to himself.

"Gentlemen," said the host, filling his glass, "I'll give you the hero of the day, and the tamer of the shrew."

St. George coloured profoundly at all that he understood of this compliment; and turned round to the grinning faces successively of the assemblage, to assure himself of the full meaning; to Harry Lowrie, in particular, he directed his eyes; but that youth averted his glances towards the ceiling, to avoid even such tacit question or reply, as it respected a family in which he was interested.

"Is it not so, Sir Starcourt?" continued the host; "are we to wear the willow, and is the

old sportsman to be thrown out at last, after a chase of half a score of years?"

"Even so," replied the Baronet coolly, "the light weights carry the day."

"Never say die, Sir Starcourt!" cried another; "it's a county plate, to be run for afresh every season!" And the speaker, as he laughed at his own jests upon the lady's fickleness, was joined by the company.

"Many's the good steed, then," said an Ardenmorite, "that has foundered in that race; and I hear there is another just entered for running."

"Who be he?" was the general demand.

"Saw you the dapper little body on the tall chesnut to-day, that took such care of himself and his hunter, trotted through gaps and gates, got off and turned over at any thing like a dyke, and took a short cut to be in at the death; the fellow with a deadly aversion to a stone wall, you might have sworn him the foot soldier?—those campaigners are so damned selfish and careful of their proper persons (out of danger), their steeds and baggage;—he is the last started."

"What! Snobbs—Captain Snobbs of the —th?"

"Some such name."

"Then he is dished, for Louisa has vowed vengeance long since against every animal that wears a red coat. She found out of old that they used always to boast of the smiles of the prime toast of the county, and that she was then. Not a bachelor of them has ever entered Ardenmore since, that she has not punished."

St. George's heart beat with exultation at these favourable tidings, but he was still too much under the general eye to move a muscle.

"How many subs has she gazetted, killed, wounded, and missing?"

"Few killed:—it is lightly these wandering gentry take the frown of an unkind damsel; next week makes them amends. There are not fellows in the world, that look with a sharper eye towards the money-box of a damsel. They all have a view to this, more than any set of men on God's earth, for whatever reason it is so. Their jesting and jocularizing together,

and being continually under the lash of each other's ridicule, makes them prize themselves on the little worldly cunning that always ranks so high wherever men live much together; and, as far as woman is concerned, they talk one another into vanity and selfishness. It was this, not Miss Pennington's coquetry, believe me, brought the red flies fluttering about the Ardenmore thousands, that would have proved so convenient a lift to a purchase.

"Come! Sir Starcourt," said an old militia-officer, wroth at the Baronet's attack, and taking up the cudgels for his profession; "was a black coat never known to come under the widow's skirt, or pay its devotion to the Ardenmore thousands?"

"Now, St. George, help me," said the Baronet, winking over; "we are in for it."

"I have nothing to say to it, I'm sure," cried our hero, backing out of the scrape.

"Hear the youth! not he," said many voices.

"Then by the virtue of my gown, if not thy affair, young man," said Sir Starcourt, "it is

not mine;—it is well known I had rather pay a bonus to get rid of matrimony, than seek it for the sake of one." And nods and other signs of applause seconded the truth of the asseveration.

"Well! reverend Baronet," said the militia gentleman, "since you throw the peril of defence upon the shoulders of *your* sub, a clerical trick, not a military one, I'll spare you both and your cloth. But 'tis illiberal for the church to cast reflections on the army at a moment when it may right soon need its support."

"Give me your hand, Sir! you are right, and I crave your pardon," cried the Baronet, whom this appeal had touched in the very core of the opinions next his heart. "I shall be proud, Sir, to be better acquainted with you. Quarrelling indeed, at this time of day, about girls and cloth, as if any of his Majesty's Irish subjects should wear ought in the hour of peril and conspiracy but the broad cloth of Orangeism."

The younger guests applauded the Baronet's

political zeal; whilst the elder ones smiled, as if willing to enjoy the exhibition that Sir Starcourt was about to make of his frenzy, by no means participating in it themselves, or not called to do so, as they thought, by the times. Sir Starcourt, however, would not lose the opportunity of making a speech, which, as the reader must have seen in ninety-nine different shapes in daily journals, I shall not here trouble them with. He wound up with the never-failing conclusion to an Orange after-dinner speech, viz. "The pious, glorious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William, who saved us from popery, slavery, brass money, and wooden shoes;" which far-famed toast the party drank, repeating its cue, *wooden shoes*, as each drank off his bumper, with a carelessness and want of zeal wonderful in men who had that very day, perhaps, ridden across the Boyne,—through the very ford rendered famous by the fall of Schomberg.

As no one seemed inclined to fan, or to participate in the political flame of the Baronet, he was fain to sink once more to sporting topics;

and in the languid interval of the conversation passing from one subject to another, the little knot of dirty fellows, already spoken of, communicated for a while their themes and jokes to the whole society; a circumstance that filled the measure of our curate's disgust, and of his desire to escape, now growing indeed necessary, if he wished to remain within the limits of sobriety. He watched sagaciously for an opportunity, and seizing it, he made a precipitate and unnoticed retreat.

Safe on the outside of the door, St. George was not the nearer to escape. His eye met none of the well-known arrangements of a metropolitan house,—that would have guided him out of doors. He wandered on from lobby to passage, passage to stairs, and stairs to lobby, till with increasing perplexity he came plump against a door, that flung open at his touch, and thus silently ushered him into—the drawing-room; for such, fearful of a worse mistake, he congratulated himself on finding it.

In its ample space were two beings, huddled up by the enormous chimney-corner, and

shivering before a burning pile of turf that might have roasted an ox, but could not infuse equable heat throughout the apartment. A tea-urn stood, not smoked or simmered, which it might have done some hours before, upon the table; and the tea-cups, "unwisely placed for show," garnished the board. Here was the female part of the jovial host's family spending their evening, lost in cold, solitude, and sleep. They gave signs of life as St. George entered, stirred upon the sofa, and drew their shawls more close around them. Our curate pitied the mother and daughter, from his soul, and upbraided himself severely for joining the boors below in their abandonment of the fair.

There was no need of pity. Mrs. and Miss were used to afternoon seclusion, and were more put out of their way by the unexpected visit of the stranger, than gratified. Have you ever seen, good reader, ladies so invaded by the first adventurous youth that quits the *salle à manger* for the *salon?* what a difficult and sad affair it is to get up a conversation?

Even so was it in the present case. Not a single topic could the curate start that the ladies could reply to, or the ladies start that the curate could reply to, until luckily St. George mentioned that he had been in the metropolis so lately as two months since: upon which they both grew alive, and asked him to give them a particular account of the latest female fashions. Now poor St. George did not know a *fichu* from a flounce, nor silk from satin; which occasioned most desperate blunders in the amiable attempts he made at acting *La Belle Assemblée* to the rustic dames, and communicating to them the state of the fashion. His powers of metaphor, however, were of use to him here; by their means he informed them, that, at that time, well-bred ladies imitated as closely as possible the gait and figure of Guinea-hens, with enormous humps affixed most tastily to the *hollow* of their backs, and with waists elevated as far up the shoulder-blades as possible. This picturesque description was received with delight and admiration by the solitary pair of females; and Guinea-hen humps were forthwith

meditated for the next assembly. St. George was ever after quite a favourite at ———, on account of the piece of information, and was pronounced to be "a nice man,—a very nice young man, indeed."

Not being joined by any more deserters from the carouse, our curate, as soon as politeness warranted, arose to take his leave of the ladies, into whose company he had most unintentionally stumbled: — indeed he could not have dreamed that the house contained a female. And this last specimen of the ways of a sporting and jovial life inclined him to defer his final opinion respecting its merits and pleasures. A pique, he reflected, had driven him to partake of this day's pastime, so foreign to his habits and character; and he had learned, moreover, that the self-assumed cause of that pique was groundless. No longer elated by speed or success, he felt somewhat ashamed of such a *digression* as this in his way of life. He had, however, attained an object, and had seen a larger body of his parishioners in their native

element, as it were; and, by joining freely in their sport and feast, had acquired a right of using his cleric influence with them, whenever that should be needed, with greater boldness and effect.

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING fairly ridden off his fit of jealousy and dudgeon, (a remedy I strongly recommend to splenetic lovers,) St. George resolved, at the first favourable opportunity, to show a contrite countenance at Ardenmore-House;—and a circumstance occurred that very day, which compelled his repairing thither.

Our readers are, perhaps, not aware that an important personage in a country town of Ireland is the Protestant minister, even although the greater part of the population be Catholic; for the priest, without any knowledge or influence beyond his narrow sphere, is quite incapable of offering worldly advice to the distressed poor in any intricate case—of procuring them redress, where the plea must

go before a distant personage or court—of signing certificates, and procuring recommendations, for numbers of little benefits and emoluments, which charitable institutions offer to the poor. The priest is unable, from his mean station, and want of knowledge and connexion with the better orders, to act thus a kind of tribune or patron to the poor of his parish. No county magistrate would be patient, or benevolent, thus to devote himself to the petty plaints and interests of those beneath him. The Protestant clergyman does all this; it is the great bond between him, and, not his flock in most cases, but his Catholic parishioners; and this solves the paradox of a nevertheless true assertion, lately made—that the Protestant clergyman was, in many instances, regarded by all persuasions as the father of the parish.

As the rector of Ardenmore was absent six months of every year, and, during that time, resident in another benefice that he held, this department of parochial duty fell, with the regular duties, to St. George's share. A pensioner wanted his certificate signed, a poor wife wanted

to eke out her pittance by being entrusted with a foundling; some wanted his reverence's good word with the landlord; others, to get letters forwarded to a son in some regiment abroad:—then, all charitable loans and gifts went through the minister's hands; and not one poor family resided in the parish, that had not need, in the course of a twelvemonth, of demanding and receiving some favour or information at the hands of the minister.

In the student and the lover, both characters very jealous of throwing away time on any other than their respective thoughts and occupations, these frequent demands to see and "spake a word with his reverence," became often exceedingly irksome. The lower Irish are most unconscionable dialogists, pleaders, and *argufyers*, of the very first order of cleverness and nuisance; and they are in the habit, moreover, of laying on flattery, or *palaver* as they call it, so thick as to disgust one utterly, if they did not take care, at the same time, to obviate such by the humour with which they amuse the hearer.

There had been one case, however, in which

St. George had been applied to, that interested him exceedingly. It was that of a young girl, who had been betrothed to a lover of similar years and order of life; she had, at least, betrothed herself. And in any county of Ireland more southward or more westward of Louth, no worldly obstacle could have intervened, except in the neighbourhood of the selfish money-getting north; in those regions it is expected that, even of the peasants, the females shall have something like a fortune, the males something like a surety of life. It is thus the progress of wealth that causes "the course of true love never to run smooth;" in sweet Munster or Connaught, a match can be made between happy lovers, with not a sou in the wide world to begin with; and a hut, thrown up in the side of a ditch by the labour of a few hours, is the habitation frequently destined to receive the newly-wedded pair. But as the north is approached, the land of linen-weaving, manufacturing, and capital, further requisites than mere love are required for the nuptial state:—the dowried maiden of forty pounds in hard gold, cocks her cap with

an air; and the youth, with a good farm and a tight lease, looks twice at a rural beauty, and shakes his head knowingly on hearing her to be without "fortin at all, at all!" Here the romance of low life begins: talk, old poets, as ye will, of the baneful effects of property and fortune upon sentiment, and the pure feelings of the state of nature: I uphold, that the artificial state of superabundant wealth and graduated ranks, is more productive of pathos, love-story, feeling, and romance. If there were neither money nor rank in this world to cross love, and make the brat complain, should we ever hear of little Cupid?

Unluckily for her future happiness, as similar possessions similarly prove, Martha had been possessed of nearly thirty pounds, which her good sire, Tim Byrne, had allowed her to accumulate from the receipts of carding, spinning, crocks of butter, and hanks of yarn, in the glorious days of war. He was a tenant of Mr. Lowrie's; and a better tenant, or a more punctual one, Laylands did not contain; "the never a hanging gale but one was due from Tim Byrne." And Martha was as comely a lass as

ever tripped, barefooted to a morning mass, with shoe and stocking, however, in her hand, which she reverentially put on before she entered the precincts of the chapel—the pilgrims of old did otherwise, on approaching holy ground. Mick, or Michy Bulger saw Martha, and loved her; danced with her at the next patron, told his tale, and was listened to by the fair Martha. A long time this went on "unknowncet" to Tim Byrne; for Michy shunned the farm by daylight, and dreaded, poor hard-working boy, that had "no back saving his fac and his fist," to face the comfortable and knowing farmer. But such doings have a short lease of secrecy. Tim found out that a mere gossoon was after Martha; and, as the neighbours all round observed, that night such a *to do* as Tim kicked in the house, all about Michy,—as how he was a beggar, and an upstart, and what not! And poor Martha fell to crying, and from crying to supplication, and from supplication into a faint *clane* off. The neighbours would have interfered, but Tim Byrne was known to be a man not given to liquor, and "an ugly man, more-

over, to meddle or make wid," being cholerous, and as ready with a blow as with a word.

Poor Martha used every pathetic and fond endeavour to bend her inexorable parent, but he would not hear of Michy; and the curse of her father, Martha could not think of incurring. To Mick Bulger, then, she sent word to see her no more, for that she could not be his. He knew what it cost her to say so much; but a farewell he would have. So they met, broke a tenpenny piece between them, and parted; and Michy, scorning the country and the fac, listed, and went off to the wars. "And from that day to this," said the informant of St. George, "sorrow a bit of Tim Byrne prospered. The world went cross wid him, and he wid the world; and Tim had the worst of it."

That year bore the last crop that Tim Byrne sold well. The peace came; Bonaparte, the Irishman's friend, was no more upon the scene; and the prices current in the market of Drogheda shook the heart of many a bluff farmer within him. The artizans and townsfolk were in delight at the cheapness of provision, and

turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the husbandman. "Ha, the rogues!" cried the burghers, "it's their turn now: when we were buying the loaf at twenty-pence, they had plenty in their barns, and they raised the prices on us. Why didn't they make hay while the sun shone? Let 'em look to themselves."

The burghers, however, had but short exultation; they themselves failed not soon to feel the consequences of the depression in a thousand ways. But the poor farmers were annihilated. Landlords were not to be brought to an abatement. They had increased their expenses and style of living in proportion to their income; and to retrench, looked like an admission of poverty, that would be discreditable. If, at last, they came down in their demands, it was not until the poor tenant was exhausted, broken in heart and resources, and ill prepared, after a total shipwreck, to launch again with slenderer means.

Honest Tim lost the rubicundity of his cheek and the peace of his mind; he went to market as usual, so did his carts—both but the ghosts

of what they had been. His crops rotted in his haggard; he had not the heart to sell them for nothing; and Gervas Lowrie, since he turned saint, had not grown more merciful to the poor: on the contrary, he had become more rigid and regular in his demands; and made mountains of remitting a small sum in the tenant's half year. Tim, too, was no bachelor, no tight, unlumbered ship to weather the storm: he was gunwale deep, poor fellow, for his family was not confined to Martha, but, besides an old mother of his, and a second wife, Tim had a little regiment of that second wife's children, wide mouthed to devour, and to demand the wherewithal to devour. Poor Martha's little fortune, the possession of which had driven her true love to the wars, soon melted unseen in the crucible of her father's disasters: one thing went after another, credit was got where it could be had, and shifts were made at a loss ever so enormous. Teeth were taken from the harrow to shoe the horses, and the shoes taken again from the horses to refit the harrow. It was a dispute, whether

Tim's self or Tim's bawn was the more lamentable sight.

In his strolls through Ardenmore upon a market day, St. George could not avoid becoming interested by the beautiful features of Martha Byrne. He was struck, too, in her by the total absence of all mirth and jocularity, in which the Irish peasantry of both sexes abound. Martha uttered no joke, and was provoked to laughter by none; her misfortunes were respected, and she was considered no fit subject to bandy country wit with. As she exposed her yarn or her eggs or her fowl for sale, Martha drew close around her her scarlet hood, and seemed wishing to withdraw from the gay gossip of the crowd to the sadness of her own heart and of her home. In former days, she would have ridden on a pillion to visit the gaiety of this same market, not to act the humbler part that she was now compelled to do. Our curate saw Martha once or twice before he asked concerning her; and having asked and learned the particulars of her story, he spoke with the sor-

rowful girl, visited Tim Byrne now and then in his sinking farm-house; and whilst he was yet on terms with the Lowries, he endeavoured to interest the 'squire of Laylands, and lead him to commiserate the state of the unhappy farmer.

"Never mind them, Sir," said Mr. Lowrie in reply; "you can't know them as I do. Besides, our countrymen know right well how to tell their own story. Byrne was wallowing in wealth five years ago, and thought his gains were to last for ever: he laid by no store against evil times. He has been far from punctual of late; and to let these fellows run in arrear, is to ruin them. Indulgence ruins the tenants, always does and did, believe me, Mr. St. George. Besides, I don't meddle in these matters; let him speak to my agent." This was all that St. George could ever win from Mr. Lowrie in favour of Tim Byrne.

In the frequent visits that St. George paid to the farm-house, he thought he perceived that Martha had some request to make,—something to demand: her cheek flushed, as she was preparing to speak; her lips moved, but never

could Martha bring herself to utter the question. The grandame and stepdame of the cabin encouraged the girl to "spake out;" but they feared themselves to anger Martha by interfering; for the mien of continued sorrow awes even the elder of the afflicted. But in the presence of a third person, though of her family and a child, Martha could not speak, until happening one day to be left nearly alone with the curate, she rose suddenly and demanded,

"If his reverence knew any thing of the Duke of York, or where he lived?"

"The Duke of York?" said St. George.

"Ay, in troth, that's how they call him, sure enough," said Mrs. Byrne, who had but just stepped to offer the relics of the potatoe repast to the pig; "and Patty has axed your reverence at last. Now she's broke the ice herself, a body may spake. Did your honour ever hear of Mick Bulger?—poor Michy! that's gone to the wars."

Martha bent over the wooden bowl, that she was busied in scouring, and abandoned the interrogatory to her step-mother.

St. George intimated that he had heard the story.

"And a sad story it is, that the poor lad should ha been sent off, and all for the lucre sake that 's gone after him. Good doesn't come of the gold that brakes harts. But whisht wi yer crying and sobbin, child, and afore the gentleman. Sorrow a one's to blame; and Tim himself laments it bitterer nor any. And well he may; if Michy were with us, he'd have helped us through these hard times. As for Tim, not a good's been in him since; and now he's next doore to beggary, and can't dig. Any how, if Martha here was right and quiet in her mind, the great God of Heaven would take care of the children."

"And can I do any thing for you, my good people?"

"If your reverence 'll be after hearing me through. After poor Michy had been gone a month or thereabouts, Martha gets a letter from him, as true and as tender,—it ud melt your honour's heart to read it! But barrin that one letter, sorrow a line ever came to tell us whether

poor Mick was alive or dead. And there was, as we hear tell, tremendious battles after that, your reverence; and Tim and mysel were morally sartain, that poor Michy was killed; and sure his letter tould us plain enough, it was to be killed he was a lookin."

Martha, during this, leaned upon the dresser, her head upon her arms, and stamping the floor with her feet; and the sobs of anguish that escaped her, went deep into the heart of St. George. "He may not have perished," said the curate.

"Sure, if he was alive, he'd contrive to let us know somehow!"

"Letters miscarry in a thousand ways."

"Is it for so many years, your reverence? But at any rate, Martha has waited long enough for true love, and sure she can't bide a lone woman all her life! She must make up her mind. Poor Michy was a clane lad and a clever; but there's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught. And there's Jack Malooney, the miller's son, ready to offer, if he thought he'd a chance; and there's the snug cooper, from

Ardee all the way, that's earnin a sight of money; but Martha 'll hear of none till she knows, for sure and sartain, and sees it under the Duke of York's own hand, that poor Michy 's in his grave. And that's what we 're been wanting o' her this many a-day, to axe your reverence how she's to find out about Michy."

" Have you made any inquiries as yet?"

" Oh, ay! of the souldiers that do be in Ardenmore we axe often; but they say, the rigiment is in foreign parts; and as to poor Michy they know nothing. And it 's three months now, since we got the schoolmaster here, and gav him his bellyfull of mate and whiskey, and such a fine letter as he help'd us to write to the Duke of York himself, he being the properest person to know ony thing of poor boys that list. But sorrow a bit the Duke has thought it worth his while to answer Martha. He keeps her letter, I'm thinkin, as Saunders M^cGilligan, the agent, does the poor tenants' petitions, in his Sunday-coat-pocket, and then makes the excuse of forgetting 'em!"

" I'm afraid," said St. George, " the Duke

of York was not the fittest person, exactly, to inquire of."

"Ay, and I said so," said the all-wise dame; "and ould Marcus, the schoolmaster, is an ould fool. And I tould Martha to axe your reverence, and she wouldn't. I do believe, she'd rather keep moping and draming that Mick may be alive, than know to a sartainty what has become of him."

"That's natural enough," said the curate, sympathizing in the feelings of the poor girl.

"Troth it is!" said the old woman, "mighty nat'ral; and none but a nat'ral ud keep any thing so long about her hart."

"Give me the name and the number of the regiment," said St. George. "I'll make inquiry. It is of the Muster-master-general, I believe, such inquiries are to be made."

"Your honour knows best."

St. George took down in his pocketbook what was requisite, told Martha to cheer up; but the poor girl shook her head, and wished that his reverence, as he departed, might never know misfortunes like to hers.

The story of Martha, as conveyed by her step-mother, had acted upon St. George's mind like the beat of drum by night, arousing from its cell every feeling of sympathy and sadness; — this ominous valediction of Martha's came to crown the agitation, like the tolling bell heard above the din, and warning each citizen to look to the danger that assailed him. It led the curate's thoughts more abruptly to consideration of self, whither, indeed, they would have been apt enough to tend. If the peace of this poor girl was marred by lost affection, what torture might not be in reserve for his sensitive, self-tormenting mind, not only disappointed in attaining the object of its wishes, but perhaps deceived and mocked by the very being to whom it had devoted itself.

This scene, however, and these reflections had preceded, by many weeks, the fit of jealousy that had seized upon St. George, on account of Captain Snobbs's reception at Ardenmore House. He had written to a friend in Dublin to make all necessary inquiries respecting the lover of Martha; and since then his hopes and

affections connected with Louisa, and in those, for the present, all his others became merged, had suffered the divers little variations, the elations and depressions already described. These little piques, however, were like the summer lightning of tropical climates, betokening a further continuation of sunshine and fair weather;—the intervention of Captain Snobbs overcast the sky with somewhat of a real cloud, and presaged nothing less than a thunder-storm. St. George's sporting fit had dispelled much of these inflammable vapours over head: it had for the day made the fretfulness of mind to be forgotten, first in the excitement of the chase, and subsequently in the fatigue consequent upon it. There is something, moreover, in bold physical exertion that inclines the spirit to be genial and generous,—something kindred to the mild benevolence that always warms the bosom of the veteran campaigner; and St. George felt the next morning cheerful and forgiving.

CHAPTER VIII.

Distracted by the duties of his station, as well as by the anxieties arising from the jeopardy in which his own heart was placed, St. George had not since visited the cabin of the Byrnes. The hand of ill-fortune had not kept away for the interval. Miss Jemima Lowrie demanded of Tim half a dozen of his little ragged urchins, to garnish the empty benches of her school-house; and Tim, now in his landlord's power, and receiving daily little favours from the kitchen and the dairy of Laylands, could make no resistance. Unkemped, unwashed, and with ill-will, the little sept of the Byrnes trudged to Laylands, to hearken to the instructions of Miss Jemima, which, whenever they were accompanied by a wedge of bread, or a trencher of

stirabout, were exceedingly welcome to young scholars. Miss Jemima, however, had deeper intentions than that of teaching the young fry their alphabet; she talked a great deal to the elder ones, about priests and catechisms, and asked them grave questions,—such as, who made and who saved them,—which she answered herself, all in a manner, and with a coaxing, furtive air that seemed, even to the infants, suspicious.

Father M^cDowd was not a shepherd that could rest ignorant or patient at these inroads upon his flock. He paid daily visits to the Byrnes, and to all the cottiers who dwelt around; and he zealously instilled antidotes stronger than the poison that he sought to counteract. Except for the purpose of opposing Miss Lowrie's endeavours at proselytism, the good father would not have thought it necessary to instruct his young flock as to the diabolical and damned condition of all who went to church. But he was now under the necessity of depicting them in the most fearful and abominable light to his little flock; and

his teaching was the more powerful, independent of parental example, for the lessons of Father M^cDowd were imaginative, full of impressive horrors, miracles, and Divine interpositions; to which Miss Lowrie had nothing to oppose, but very naked common sense, stupid morality, and pragmatic maxims of religion, which the young and the ignorant were incapable of comprehending, or reverencing. The consequence was, not only that Miss Jemima failed utterly in spreading the light of natural religion through the rising generation around her, but that her ill-imagined endeavours had the effect of causing the blackest bigotry to be instilled into the youthful poor, joined necessarily with a detestation of herself, her family, and all her persuasion.

Still Tim Byrne was in poverty and arrear, and M^cDowd, considering circumstances, really patient; until Miss Lowrie arrived at the very climax of imprudence, by presenting the eldest child of Byrne, that attended her school, with a new Bible,—one of them placed at her disposal by the generosity of the lately-convened as-

sembly, some of whose acts have been recorded. Father M'Dowd happened to be occupying a bench at the side of Tim Byrne's fire-side when the child entered with the new present,—fearful, in despite of the recommendation of its being new, that it must contain something diabolical, as coming from the hands of the heretic Miss Lowrie. The sacristan of the monastery did not seize the similar volume of the Lady of Avenel, in the early days of the Reformation, with more zeal, than Father M'Dowd laid hold upon the obnoxious gift of Miss Jemima. He could carry his forbearance no further; but summoning the whole family, not excepting Tim Byrne himself, he preached more long and more vehemently than ever he did in the pulpit, against the disciples of the Devil, and his imps, who were come to entrap the souls of the faithful, in the shape of lady Bible distributors and school-mistresses. Father M'Dowd terrified his hearers—both old and young alike. The children heard, that to open a Bible was tempting the Great God! (which word *tempting*, by the by, is used in our

religious education as expressive of some awful crime, very unintelligible to youth). Tim Byrne was himself peremptorily commanded to allow his children to attend Miss Lowrie's teaching no more. Tim tried a little at expostulation: but not only was the priest wroth and inexorable; but even the good women of his own family joined their pastor. Father M^cDowd threatened excommunication in case of disobedience, and swore that all the *stations* of Lough Darrig would not wash away the sins of sending his children in the way of damnation.

Tim Byrne foresaw the consequences, but was obliged to submit; and the non-appearance of the young clan, after the fatal gift of the Bible, told Miss Jemima, plainly enough, of the defection. Six of her scholars gone, at one fell swoop, was a deadly blow to the languishing school-house; Miss Jemima sent, and herself at last walked down to recover her lost materials of tuition. But her coming was observed, and the varlets were all stowed safe away before Miss Jemima, heedless of wading

in filth, and encountering pigs and poultry, in the prosecution of her zealous intentions, crossed the threshold of the Byrne's cabin. Martha was, as usual, engaged in some household work; the grannum, shrunk into herself, occupied the chimney-corner, muttering some eternal soliloquys that no one ever heeded; and the mistress of the cabin was scraping together the little refuse of the last meal for the hard-faring pig.

"Save you kindly, Miss," said the dame, and the salutation was repeated by Martha.

"I am glad to see you looking better, Martha," said Miss Jemima, who of late felt for the poor deserted girl; "and how do you get through the winter, Judith Byrne?"

"Musha then, Miss, myself doesn't know at all at all—it's the wonder how we're alive—and if it waren't for the sup of buttermilk, and the kindness of the master, we 'd be in berrin ground long ago, since."

An Irish *poor mouth* is a thing so exquisite in its way, that no description nor dialogue can do justice to it. Whether it be the extreme of impudence, or the extreme of wretchedness,

that they are most felicitous in affecting and expressing has been doubted; for our part, however, we should give them the palm in the latter. Judith Byrne, however, had reasons for her bewailings; had she not, they would most probably have been as sorrowfully doled forth.

"And where are the children?" demanded Miss Lowrie.

"The children!—troth! an they're just gone to pick a *bresna*, the craturs, to bile their own dinners. Tim's hard set to finish the praties; and Martha, poor girl, to have her yarn done to help to make up the rint; and myself ha'n't time—the gossoons must keep the pot boiling, any how."

"And is this the reason you havn't sent them to Laylands this morning?"

"Sure enough it is, Miss,—what other?" said Judy Byrne, delighted, as she thought, at thus getting out of the scrape; whilst the old hag in the chimney-corner raised her hands aloft, and struck them on her knees, increasing the tone of her soliloquy to something like utterance.

"If that be your only reason, Judy Byrne,"

said the young lady, "the want of fuel shall not stand between your little ones and useful instruction. I'll have a kish of turf sent down to you this evening; and let the young ones come to Laylands to-morrow morning."

"Oh! then, if your ladyship," replied the alarmed Judy, "wouldn't be after axing me to send the children, I'd be more obligated than for the turf."

"Then the scarcity of fuel is not the cause, not the only cause, Judith Byrne, of your not sending the children?"

"Sure, they're kilt with the could these mornins, trudging barefooted up to the big house, Miss."

"Not more killed, I suppose, than picking a *bresna*. Besides, they shall have shoes, will that satisfy you?"

"Och! wirra, what'll become of me!" said the sore-pressed Judith; "Miss Jimhimah so kind, and me necessiated to offind her. 'Tisn't no fault of mine; but I daren't let the childer go."

"Who forbids you?"

"The priest, sure; who else would we listen to under Heaven, to disoblige your father's daughter, barrin the priest? And you knows, Miss, that we daren't look cross or contrary to him, any how."

"And what reason has the priest for forbidding you to send the children to me?"

"His own rasons, sorrow a bit of myself knows them! Father M'Dowd was here on Saturday the night, Miss, and the booke the children brought, set him dancing mad."

"I dare say it did," said Miss Lowrie.

"And you may say that, Miss. I tould him, sure, the children couldn't spell hardly, and wouldn't know any thing about it; and that yoursel, if there were any harm in it, didn't know of it neither; that it was a praty book, and would look well on the dresser,—and all to that; but the sorrow a halfperth ud satisfy the priest but to carry it aff in his pocket."

"Carry it off!—what, take the Bible I gave you? Upon my word this *is* insolence. And you let him take it?"

"Arrah! how could I be helping it, Miss?"

"You had better get the book back from your priest then, Judith Byrne; I am not bound to supply *him* with religious learning."

"Give the priest larning, C— safe us—a young lady to larn the priest," cried the woman, horrified, however before obsequious. Even Martha cast up her eyes; but the old grandmother in the corner lost all patience.

"Tache the priest!—och! the concait of them quality," muttered the hag; "they think the readin o'books is the only way to get larnin. Did ye ever see or hear tell of Father McDowd, Miss Lowrie?" said the hag, becoming intelligible.

"I know nothing about him," replied the young lady.

"Then the more's the pity; if ye did, ye'd go by what he said, and not go agin him. He's a larnid and powerful man, McDowd."

"In what is he learned and powerful, good woman?" asked Miss Lowrie, who loved controversy, even with an old Catholic crone.

"He's a very maracle-worker, that young

priest; and can drive the ould one (that's ould Nick, saving your presence,) afore him through the country. Sure he preached a devil out of Bess Bothus, in the shape of a brass button, wid a lock of hair in the shank."*

"Indeed!" said Miss Lowrie, amazed in despite of her ill-humour at finding her Bible had fallen into the holy miracle-worker's hands.

"Ay, indeed, and in troth! And it's he that knows what's good or bad; he'll give up the book, I warrant him, to Miss, if she wants it; though it'd be better if she'd ha nauthing to do wid it. By the same token the priest 'll be here the day, to curse the red worms out of the pratie garden; there's no banishin 'em at all at all, and they're ating the oats up by the roots; and what could we do, I'd like to know, against varmint of this sort, but for the priest? long life to him!"

And Judith continued uttering, ever and anon,

* Fact. A miracle of late years, and announced, as having veritably taken place, from a pulpit in the Irish metropolis, by one of the most learned and popular preachers of the Roman Catholic church of Ireland.

the response of "ay, in troth," to the panegyric of her mother-in-law on the power and virtues of Father McDowd. Fond as she was of controversy, Miss Jemima felt that there was no use in attempting to undertake one against a personage in the habit of miracle, and arming for the avowed purpose of performing one. She therefore wisely, though still indignantly, retreated, leaving the field clear for her ecclesiastical antagonist. The urchins, whom she sought, there was no hope of recovering: the protestants of the parish were, for the most part, too wealthy and comfortable to need or accept of her eleemosynary schooling for their children; and with no very amiable feelings in consequence, Miss Jemima was necessitated to resolve on an abandonment of her hobbyhorse of instruction.

The Byrne family, as their secession had given the great and final blow to her projects, were the principal objects of Miss Lowrie's resentment; to participate in which, she was powerful enough to compel her father, his agent, and steward. The ears of Mr. Lowrie were deaf to Tim Byrne's pleading, and the kitchen and dairy of

Laylands were alike closed against Judith, and even Martha. The agent was ordered to have an eye to Tim, lest he should run; the steward to look sharp if his cow or horse strayed upon the demesne, when the animals were inevitably pounded,—a rigour with which the poor farmer had never before been visited. Even the children were forbidden to gather their *bresna*, or bundle of sticks, beyond their own immediate fences; and prosecution was threatened for some twigs that had been cut beyond the established *mearing*. These last visitations of misfortune, poor Tim was not stout enough in either heart or pocket to bear up against: he saw how affairs must go at the last, and from faint-heartedness he at length gave over the activity and exertion with which he had, in spite of forebodings, continued to prop for a while the affairs of his sinking family. Tim had been always a sober and a domestic man, but now he became better acquainted with the public-houses of Ardenmore; he flew to that only antidote against despair that can be purchased, and was

constant in attendance on market-days, more as a buyer of liquor than a seller of grain. This was added to the sorrows of his family, and of poor Martha. In his return home at night, however low-spirited, they had felt cheered and comforted; but his new and fatal remedy for grief was the destruction of all hope in them.

Whilst the Byrnes were thus treading fast the down-hill path of misfortune, St. George was absorbed in the varying moods of his passion, alternating from hope to fear, from confidence to suspicion. In his rides and walks, too, he rather shunned the direction of Laylands, in which the Byrnes dwelt; and so impatient had the lover become, and intolerant of crowd and bustle, that on market-days he took care to leave the town for some far and solitary ride, until evening restored its streets to quiet. Owing to these causes, a long interval elapsed without his seeing or hearing of Martha, or her father. His thoughts frequently recurred to the poor girl, whose story had interested him, but he waited daily for an answer to his inquiries respecting

Bulger, that when he next visited the cottage, it might be with tidings of one kind or other.

Pondering on any subject, save the Byrnes, St. George sate on the morning after his sporting trip at home, in the good humour we have described, and meditating some excuse for paying a visit to Ardenmore House and Louisa.

"A man wanted to spake with his reverence mighty badly," he was told.

"Who is he?"

"'Tis I," said Tim Byrne, making himself visible; for, like a knowing dun, he had followed his announcer to the door of the curate's sanctorium.

"And what's the matter with you, Tim?"

"Troth, your reverence, we're fairly kilt at last,—racked quite,—and I came to you."

"Does any thing ail Martha?" asked St. George.

"Nauthing more than ever,—it 's on all of us that it's come at last."

"What is come?"

"Poverty and ruination sure,—what else?"

"I am sorry to hear this, Tim. And what can have brought this upon you in so short a time?"

"Devil a halperth! then, but those 'semblies, and school-houses, and the like. Whatsomever put in people's heads to think of 'em, to distress poor bodies, when the times are hard enough o' themsels."

"And what can the assemblies or the school-houses possibly have to do with you, my good friend?"

"Faith an' that's what myself can't tell. But your honour knows how we 've been sitiated with the landlord, Mr. Lowrie, this long time; the ould rint quit unpossible to pay, and no abatement fixed, but his honour taking all he can get;—so that I may say, he has us fairly in his hand. What vexes me is, that this isn't the way he trates the others that have the luck to have no wives or childer; they've nothing to do but run, and he 's afraid to drive 'em to 't. Whereas he knows I can't, your reverence, and so he grinds me."

"Well, Tim," said St. George, "you know that in all this I cannot help you; I have no

influence with Mr. Lowrie; and I do not want to hear any ill of him."

"Is it myself spake ill of any one?" replied Tim; "not I, in troth. But I'm a comin to it, if your reverence'll hear me. Hard-driven we war kept these cruel times; but still we bore on, ontill now that Miss Jimmy Lowrie has set us all astray with the priest."

"What! with Father M'Dowd?—What do you mean?"

"Your reverence knows the meetin that was here to obligate us all to larn to spell out of yere Scripter. Long life to yerself! that took no part or hand in it; and that's what we all love ye for."

"You mistake, my good friend. The meeting was not for any such purpose. It was merely for the purchase and distribution of cheap copies of the Scriptures."

"Ay, your reverence, that's it; and it's all the same, sure. As they tould us then, it has proved since. For soon after Miss Jimmy set up her school, to tache the children, just as if larning to spell ud make 'em a bit the better."

"And very charitable and kind I think the

conduct of Miss Lowrie to have been, in giving her time and attention to teach the poor children around her. A knowledge of reading and writing, Tim Byrne, would have helped your children, perhaps, to earn their bread by and by."

"Then, begging your reverence's pardon," said Tim, "I'd rather see the whole boilin o' them in their graves, than have 'em made clarks or torneys. It isn't myself that ud like to be contradicting or argufying with your reverence's honour, on what it must know best, sure, and why not:—but look at the townsfolk themsels and their childer, that ha been taught to read and to spell—and you see, they're black Presbyterons every one. And by my soul! if ye spelt us all into that, it's but a bad bargain ye'd be drivin."

St. George felt that there was some truth in this part of the poor man's argument, however he had hit upon it; and the curate made no contradiction or comment.

"But as I was goin to 'quaint your reverence, when Miss axed for the childer, sure Judy couldn't but send 'em. And sure as she did, it

warn't to spell at all at all, that Miss Jimmie taught 'em, but tip-top larnin to—to puzzle the priest; and if you war but to see Father M^cDowd, how mad he was at the hathen knowledge that had been put into the craturs. For all that, I got round the priest, and talked him quiet oncet or twicet, for he is a good sort of a body, and likes a drop, and isn't malevolent the laste taste in the world. Ontill last Saturday night it was come five weeks, who should be with us but Father M^cDowd, when the childer cam home. And what should little Judy have in her fist but a bran-new Bible, given her, she said, by Miss, all as one as if it was a story-book. Och, by my soul! ye might as well ha' been tying Dundalk Bay in a big storm down wid a rope of suggawns, as thought of quieting him. Pullialoo! your reverence knows what the clargy are when they're vexed;—troth, they're as bad as the women, every bit; and that's saying enough for 'em. And the long and the short of it was, that Father M^cDowd wouldn't hear of me sending the childer any more at all at all."

"Well?"

"And sure that angered Miss, and Miss angered master; and it's all fallen upon poor Tim's head. Judy and Martha were first forbidden the big house; Martha went up the day after the bible-row to the big house, and all the young ladies flew at and abused her; and the poor girl would ha cried, if she could, but the tears din't come to the broken-harted cratur. And then the cow was pounded every hour in the day, and the childer frighted and threatened; and at lasht, down comes the agent, and axes Tim for what he hasn't. And he driv off our heifer, your reverence, and we're to be turned out to the ditch, and all our bits o' things, the remains of our ould days o' comfort, are to be canted immadiately; and ——"

Poor Tim Byrne could say no more, but ground his teeth together tight to keep the big drops from bursting forth from his eyes, and shaming the furrowed cheeks of manhood by trickling down them. St. George himself could not reply to the unfortunate man, who continued,—

"There 's more like me in the country persecuted, and all for some trifle o' the kind! And I know what they'll do, is to unite and ruin the country, by burnin and slaying, and massacreeing every new tenant that dares to step into their shoes. But I'm a paceable man, and the women dependent on me, and what to do in the wide world this blessed day I don't know."

"What sum do you want to make up your rent, Tim?" asked the benevolent curate.

"Sorrow a use in your reverence axing. Nor will mysel tell you, for fear you'd think it was for that I came:—I wouldn't take the room-full of golden guineas to live on the land of Laylands. Let the negers take what they can get; I'll wash my hands of them, and begin the world again, if I could only get a place to put my head in. Maybe your reverence ud spake a word to the rector that 's coming now to this part of the country, or to Mr. Pennington, or any of the gentlefolk; there might be a place with one or other o' them, that ud do Tim Byrne. And I'm an honest man, your reverence, tho' I have gone to rack; and was in a right good way

o' living afore the pace. Bad luck to the red coats! that couldn't let Bony alone where he was. It 's the downfall o' him, that was the downfall of the country. And talkin o' the red coats, your honour has heard nothing for Martha? She says not a word, poor thing; but her look says plain enough, if poor Michy were here now to help us,—and I can't bear that look."

"I have received no answer whatever as yet to my inquiries," said St. George. "With respect to yourself, Tim, which is the more pressing matter at present, I'll do what I can, as far as speaking goes; but I fear my influence is but weak."

"If your reverence 'll spake for me, it's all I can axe," said Tim; "the word of the good heart never failed a poor man,—his blessing be upon you!"

No sooner had Tim Byrne quitted St. George, after telling his mournful story, than the curate, with the thoughts of even Louisa Pennington absorbed in his benovolent zeal to aid the oppressed cottier, set forth to Arden-

more House. He was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. Pennington in his grounds; to whom he forthwith opened the case of this unfortunate victim to the fall of Bonaparte, and the rise of New Light. Mr. Pennington at first evaded the wishes of St. George, unwilling to seem to stand forth the receiver or protector of a tenant that Mr. Lowrie had dispossessed with resentful feelings. But the eloquence of the curate won upon him, as the latter depicted, with indignant eloquence, the cruelty and petty retaliation of his saintly neighbour.—However irresolute or unwilling Mr. Pennington was at first, and for a long time, to incur the possibility of offending the owner of Laylands, the story of Martha, which the curate brought forth as a powerful reserve to overcome his disinclination, finally conquered. And it was decided, that the unfortunate Tim Byrne and his family should find a refuge on the estate of Ardenmore.

CHAPTER IX.

THE benevolent purpose of the curate's visit being accomplished, the selfish part alone remained to be fulfilled. Mr. Pennington made no observation respecting St. George's having absented himself for so many days; and this the curate attributed to delicacy, or some especial motive; whereas the squire had never, perhaps, once turned his thoughts upon his young clerical friend since. But your sensitive beings are sharp-sighted enough to descry a motive in every thing. It is not to be supposed, however, that the young ladies were either so blind or preoccupied, as not to have perceived the curate's secession and its cause. Louisa was delighted at having thus played off the army against the church; and vowed that

Captain Snobbs was become the most amusing creature, since her attention had called him forth. He had been at first an animal upon his good behaviour—well-behaved and dull; but since his vanity and freedom had acquired opportunities to break forth, his vaunts, and extravagancies, and self-complacencies, formed one of those delicious monologues of farce, which the fair sex so love to enjoy.

The Captain had been regular in his assiduities during the secession of the curate; and Louisa felt considerably relieved by the amusement of coquetry, practised upon a subject in whom her heart was nowise interested. The amiable and simple Mary in vain expostulated with her cruel cousin, in behalf, indeed, of the male sex in general, but more especially for the mild and sensitive St. George.

"What would you have me do, my dear Mary," would Louisa reply, "except torment the creatures, whom I used to dream of as angels, and whom I find nothing but compounds of self, affectation and oddity?"

"Why not, then, permit them to seek their happiness elsewhere in peace?"

"And see myself miserable alone! What amiability you preach, my sweet cousin, to one upon the very unamiable verge of being an old maid."

"Marry one of them, my dear Louisa, and avoid the fate."

"No! Mary; to be tyrannized over, nay, say even thwarted, by a being whom you can neither all love nor respect, is a fate far more dreadful than leading apes. And I am past loving. Had I been always without a heart, it would have mattered little; but I *had* one, frittered as it was, and the memory of its wild sensations haunts me. No! I cannot be contented with a secondary, with an inferior passion—and any other I am incapable of feeling. Do you know, I struggle to love sometimes, and even flatter myself at others that I do. But it is all flattery, false! My sense of the ridiculous is too acute, my pulse beats too leisurely; and, like other old women, I should

only make a fool of myself by fancying my feelings young."

"Ah! Louisa, and have you not merited this fearful state?"

"I have indeed, Mary, deserved misery;—but I see no necessity for increasing my punishment. I am doomed to be unhappy single; but unhappy as a wife, is a state I would avoid as far more dreadful."

"And if this be your resolution, why torture all the luckless specimens of mankind that fall in your way?"

"I torture them, Mary! Would you have me write nun upon my forehead, or marry in a hurry, like the pretty Miss O., to avoid killing hapless youth? Wait, my dear Mary, not only until you are my age, but until you are a grandmother, and you will find the woman adhere to your feelings still. Men have penetration enough, Mary, if their vanity would not obscure their eyesight, to see what is jest, what feeling; and if their vanity does stand in the way, they deserve the punishment.

Do you pity such beings as Snobbs or Sir Starcourt?"

"No!" replied Mary; "but for Charles St. George I feel sincerely. He seems so simple, so tender, so true, so sensitive, that if my heart were not engaged, I should fall in love with him myself, Louisa."

"Upon my word! I shall warn Harry to look to himself. And I believe if you were to do so, Mary, I should take pity on him immediately; for, in truth, my languid powers of affection need such an excitement as a rival to fan them into something like passion."

Mary answered but with a sigh to these, to her incomprehensible feelings; she thought them to be affected by Louisa. They were not. The sluggish, apathetic state in which she suffered, but would not arise from, was hers, just as she described it. And the feelings of her own heartlessness were embittered by the recollection that she had been otherwise. Had not coquetry or fate stepped in to mar the natural current of her life, those feelings

that she now regretted would have waxed faint, it is true, even as they had actually become; but then they would have been replaced by others as delicious and as noble—those of maturity, for instance; and in their fulness she could not have regretted the decay of younger passions. But at her years, to recur and recommence the path of life was difficult; time's vehicle is not one that tarries; and in it borne on, Louisa could but revert her glances and regrets towards the past, without the possibility of return, or the resolution to attempt it. Could youth, that is so apt to contemn and to misuse its genial feelings, foresee but for a moment how passing, how irrecoverable, and how regretted these afterwards become—why, we should have fewer worn-out rakes, and fewer maids, or women, all as unwedded in heart, *of the world!*

"But he really is quite a proficient in our own art, this curate, whom you call so simple, Mary. He would break thy heart, girl, had you him for a lover. He quarrels with you on principle, by way of whetting your affection, and

varying his own feelings. His sighs and poutings succeed one another rapidly as the waves of the tide; he alternates from pique to protestation. He is a true lover, I do believe; for he seems determined to make himself and his mistress wretched. I really do not know what to do with him; his strange mode of wooing has certainly some power or charm about it; and I own myself, Mary, not altogether indifferent to this St. George. But, dear me, to take offence at Snobbs's being here, and fly off, and stay away. Now I will engage he is revelling in dreams, like the Arabian china-vender, and expects that I, his princess, shall approach him for forgiveness on my bended knees. The apparent humility, and really overweening impertinence, of these studious and contemplative folk is wonderful;—it is incredible, till you have actual experience of it. The pride and vanity of all the rest of the world is external, but with them it is profoundly buried as it is profoundly rooted."

"Now, my dear Louisa, do not go so deeply; your terrible penetration deceives, more than

the want of it. St. George is a modest, retiring, sensitive youth, who loves you, and can have no premeditated purpose in this strange conduct. A little whimsical already, his affection for you has driven him mad outright; and if all the world saw and mocked his extravagance, you alone, Louisa, should refrain. I wish he were to come oftener to Ardenmore, and we would humanize him."

"Well! Mary," said Louisa, "I thank you for that. It is a delightful idea. A *menagerie* of lovers would be a most amusing appendage to a lady's abode."

"Fie now! Louisa. And I declare, here is Mr. St. George himself!"

"He seems excessively nervous," said Louisa. "Captain Snobbs leading the forlorn-hope, could not look more cadaverous."

"Well! thou heartless creature! Do now, Louisa, set him at his ease by some kind word," said the amiable Mary, when the curate's entrance interrupted her.

"And are you quite recovered, Sir?" said Miss Pennington, after a little time. "We

were very much frightened, I assure you, when you went away so suddenly last week; and were about to send down to inquire yesterday, when some one told us that you were seen leading the chase with the —— hounds yesterday. I never knew you hunted, Mr. St. George?"

"Nor did I know it myself until yesterday," answered St. George, smiling; "some whim urged me to try for once the pleasures of the sport."

"Open confession," said Miss Pennington; "then you allow yourself to be whimsical, Mr. St. George?"

"I fear it has been the case of late, though not my natural character. I hope, if that my whims have in aught offended, Miss Pennington at least will pardon them."

"Dear me," said Miss Pennington, "do not talk of pardons, the word has a sound of fearful romance in it."

"And why fearful?"

"Because so near akin to the ridiculous."

"I am afraid, then, that you must have found me very ridiculous at times," observed St. George.

Louisa smiled most malicious assent.

"Not more than either of us, I am sure," said Mary.

"No, in truth," said Louisa, "we have indulged, especially of late, in nonsense of a very exalted kind, for which our weak women's brains are not to be taxed. It was our friend, Mr. St. George here, with his out-o'-the-world thoughts and fancies, who communicated to us an extravagant tone of enthusiasm ; and having no sooner wound our imagination to a proper pitch, than the magician vanishes,—no doubt, laughing at our folly. Whilst the next tidings we learn of our sentimentalist is, that the tender and timorous youth is leading a gang of break-necks in the mad career of a fox-chase. Such versatility of whim and influence, alike over squires and ladies, would have constituted a sorcerer in the olden time. However, this last respite that he has allowed us from his incantations, has served to break the spell, and restore our senses. And now, I think, we bid fair to set the enchanter at defiance."

"What can be all this that you are saying, Louisa?" asked Mary.

"A very unjust accusation, and harsh sentence passed against me, I fear," said St. George.

"Simple self-defence! nothing more," exclaimed Louisa, and she hummed,

> "Oh! ladies, beware of a gay, young clerc,
> Who loves and then rides away."

"Nay, indeed, you must forgive me, Miss Louisa," said St. George.

"What! asking pardon again,—for some imaginative fault I warrant. Surely you, Reverend Sir, a sober and orthodox parson, cannot be the sorcerer we dread?"

And the curate, thus flung aback, remained mute until the entrance of Mr. Pennington relieved him.

Mr. Pennington mentioned that he had seen poor Tim Byrne, and had arranged his becoming a tenant of Ardenmore. "I am much afraid," said he, "that the Lowries will be in dudgeon thereat. But I have seen and spoken with Byrne himself, and with his daughter Martha; whose story, girls, I wonder you never heard or mentioned to me. And it is an act of real

charity, a case in which the fear of offending one's neighbour even should not interfere. And done it shall be, by Jupiter!"

"What about Tim and Martha Byrne, father?" said Mary.

"And Mr. St. George even has not informed you? Why! what can you have been talking about all this time?"

Louisa coloured slightly; and St. George observed, that he was about to acquaint the young ladies with the story when Mr. Pennington had entered. The curate then related the story of the Byrnes, which interested both the Miss Penningtons much.

"She must have coquetted with the lad, Martha herself must," said Louisa, "or he would not have listed merely for the old man's denial."

Mary, from whom the tears fell, would have answered this indignantly, and thereby excited her elder cousin's mirth, if the presence of the curate had not restrained her from bringing forth Louisa's half-affected unamiability.

Mr. Pennington patted his daughter's cheek.

"I hope, my dear Mary," said he, "that our pity for these Byrnes will not bring any further unpleasantness to you and Harry. I almost wonder, as it is, how my starched friend Gervas permits his son to frequent our unhallowed abode, especially with the serious views that Harry entertains towards you, my girl. I fear they want nothing but a pretext to oppose and mar the happiness of both, and they might readily seize upon the assistance we are about to hold out to the Byrnes, as such."

"That should have been considered," said Louisa; "to sacrifice our own happiness to a benevolent whim,—to a whimsical motive or personage of any kind, would be the height of madness."

"Nay," said Mary Pennington, "I have full confidence in Harry's affection, and his influence over Mr. Lowrie is very great, notwithstanding his opposition to the over-seriousness of the rest of the family. Let not fears for me or Harry interfere with your benevolent intentions towards the Byrnes; the thought would distress me, and Harry too, I am certain, more than

even a slight interruption to our own little hopes and plans."

"Very well, my kind-hearted Mary, be it so," said her father; "Harry, I dare say, will be able to talk down the wrath of the saints. I must go to speak with the steward, respecting the reception of the new tenant."

When St. George was left once more alone with the ladies, and that Louisa had severely censured her cousin for risking her own tranquillity that she might befriend a sentimental peasant, Louisa's coquetry, that formerly consisted in acting the amiable, now seemed to pride itself in displaying the contrary. The conversation, that is, Louisa's raillery, recurred to torture the penitence of St. George, and punish the curate for his late fretful absence, and his sporting attempt at affecting the careless. And if to torture was her object, Louisa succeeded in inflicting on the sensitive and impatient St. George, a sufficient portion to satisfy her utmost vengeance. The curate was bent on making his peace, and bore all with an air of contrition, that could not fail to disarm

even affected and premeditated resentment; and the cruel Louisa, at length, relented, into her old feelings and ways of kindness towards him.

These revolutions of sentiment take place in hours, fatal to ladies who wish to preserve their independence. They are entrapped into feeling in this manner without being prepared; and it is in similar moments that vows and promises are most often extracted, in general adhered to by the fair, if it requires more trouble to break through than to keep them; and, slighted at times from motives all as trivial. Mary Pennington, who had, in no small degree, contributed to her cousin's returning kindness to the curate, and who witnessed it with pleasure, proposed a short walk in the grounds, knowing, that there she might linger behind and loiter aside without so palpably leaving St. George and Louisa alone to an *eclaircissement*, as her quitting the room would do—an abrupt mode of leaving lovers to a *tête-à-tête*, at once both awkward and awful.

The curate was excited and in high spirits

from his success relative to the Byrnes, and his patience weathered round the cold points of Louisa's caprice; on which, at any other time it would have been cast away. He was wound up, in fact, to the pitch proper for the task of wooing, and *talked over* the coquette, until she began really to call in question her former opinions of him. It was the lucky hour, and chance excitement allowed St. George to seize the opportunity. Some of our readers must have observed a retiring, contemplative man, aroused by some trivial cause to assume for a moment the conversational lead, that at other times he would shrink from;—with what a brilliant success he wields the momentary sceptre, and assumes, through the means of inspiration, that easy and commanding tone of confidence, which, in accomplished men of breeding, sense, and self-possession, is the acquirement of long training and habit.

Similar was the tone which his late feats, his success, and perhaps some physical cause of the moment enabled St. George to assume with Louisa; who, though prepared to battle against

and mock every thing in the way of supplication from the lover, was thus taken completely by surprise, and surrendered, to her own astonishment, almost at discretion.

St. George mentioned the encouragement of Captain Snobbs, a fellow he despised, as conduct that he had a *right* to complain of. And, strange to say, the subdued Louisa had not courage, or it did not occur to her to question or demur to any such right. But he thought nothing of it, he asserted. He was confident, that the ardour of his sentiments could be equalled by no rival; the basis of his attachment was nobler, his feelings purer, and the whole category of his love quite another species of passion from that entertained and talked of by the world in general. Louisa would have laughed at this, if told in a whine,—its irresistibility was in the tone of taking it for granted. He vowed it was so; and she thought, she felt it must be so. Sir Starcourt, Snobbs,—sword and gown kicked the beam, as the weight of the curate's momentary impudence and eloquence sunk upon her heart. He knelt, that

young and romantic minister of the church, but on one knee, however, before the shrine of the peerless Louisa. And the fair worshipped, ere she could call to her aid one cautious, calculating, vacillating thought, for the immediate purpose of freeing her hand and glove, then imprisoned in the grasp of her adorer; and, moreover, lest both should be surprised in such very romantic and ludicrous positions;—for these, and for these motives alone, Louisa half-nodded, half-muttered acquiescence.

CHAPTER X.

"AND what may you have stood up for, Sir?" demanded an imperious bishop of one of his clergy, at a visitation, after having indulged in some acrimonious remarks respecting another who was absent.

"I stood up to screen Mr. ——— from your Lordship's resentment," was the reply.

"Resentment!" cried his Lordship shocked, "God forbid that such a monster should find harbour in this bosom."

"Oh! my Lord," replied the pert junior of the church, "we have heard of even holy and pious resentments."

An holy and pious resentment, no doubt, was that which seized upon the Lowries, when

they heard of the assistance and refuge held out to their tenant Byrne, the ungrateful and ungodly wretch, who could not put together his rent out of low prices, and who refused to make up the deficiency by yielding his offspring to Miss Jemima's tuition. Indignation pervaded the whole household of Laylands, and even Harry felt unable to face the storm with his wonted recklessness and good humour. On him, indeed, as an obstinate adherent of Old Light, and the nearest object that frowns and sharp-things could be wreaked upon, the first gusts of resentment fell. He bore all in hopes of propitiating their ferocity; even the amiable taunts of his sisters he left unanswered; but the source of anger and ill-humour was one not to be sweetened or exhausted; and Mr. Lowrie, at last, reached the extremity of his ire, in solemnly forbidding Harry to visit Ardenmore House for the future, under pain of his heaviest displeasure. Harry made no useless reply at the moment, deeming it best to await the ebb of angry feeling in his parent. That, however, came not as he reckoned, and

poor Mary was severely punished for her kind-heartedness towards the Byrnes, by the protracted absence of her lover.

St. George, however, was the chief, and indeed, the deserving object of the displeasure of the saints; he it was who had guiltily displaced O'Sing, and deviated from the path of pathos and sanctitude, which the late curate had followed to their edification; he it was that had seen them browbeaten and overcome by the profane eloquence of Cornelius Slater, yet had not raised a sentence in their defence. He had leagued with M'Dowd to continue darkness over the land, and to leave Protestant and Papist in ignominious and graceless good feelings and peace between each other. Lastly, he had interfered between landlord and tenant, had spirited the Byrnes to follow the priest's advice, not Miss Jemima's plan of education, and had secured to the Byrnes, through his interest with Mr. Pennington, a comfortable retreat, which would convert the vengeance of the Lowries into something like a piece of good fortune, befallen the peasant family. These

grievances, duly arranged and amplified into a serious accusation, were not reserved for the private reflections of the saints, and the whetting of their spleen, but were communicated out of mere respect and zeal for the church, not only to the rector of Ardenmore parish, but to the bishop of the Diocese, who happened to be the then primate of all Ireland.

As the visitation drew near, our curate set forth, along with his brethren, to the court of this sacerdotal monarch at Armagh, there to answer to the direful charges of the saints; which, however, weighed but little upon him, secure in a good conscience, and in ladies' love. His journey through the more mountainous and picturesque regions of the north, afforded him a time and scene most favourable for indulging those fond and happy fancies that were uppermost in his breast. Something similar to those of a sailor landing after his last voyage, are the feelings of a successful lover, his term of wooing over,—the painful task has been fulfilled, the joys of port are at hand, and the sea of doubt and fear no longer to be ventured upon.

The stride taken from youth to manhood, at this period, is prodigious; life is henceforward viewed from a different position, and with different feelings, with many that are less enchanting, certainly; but those that remain, however subdued, are more solid and secure. It is a solace to be enabled to look upon a group of enchanting females, admiring but unmoved, secure in the possession of a similar being. How happy an exchange this, for the nervous, longing, anxious state of bachelordom, in which we regard each new and lovely countenance with the dread of our future fate depending on its frown or smile.

Similar were St. George's self-congratulations, for after his late interview with Louisa, he felt confident, without arrogance, that she was irrevocably his. Anticipations of wedded happiness formed the main subject of his reveries, which he was unwillingly compelled now and then to digress from by the company and conversation of some brother ecclesiastic, bent upon the same journey. These stray companions, however, of the same cloth, harmonized but little with his

tone of mind; the egotism of St. George then prizing his individual feelings far above the numerous and extensive ecclesiastical interests that seemed to fill their minds. He cared not who had fallen under the weight of sequestrations, who under that of the Primate's displeasure—what benefice was vacant, or with whom it was likely to be filled; nor indeed was he altogether master of those controversial points of dispute, which divided the very parish in which his office lay. In this happy state of ignorance and carelessness, St. George arrived at the archiepiscopal see.

He with some difficulty secured a lodging for the night,—a retired one he sought, but neither town nor inn afforded this; and as the days were by this time too short to allow of meditative evening walks, which St. George would willingly have taken for the purpose of contemplating at that seasonable hour, the hierarchal relics that adorn Armagh, he found himself constrained to join the society of his clerical comrades. Young folk, when thoughts run in the vein of Zimmerman, and who have become most sadly

sentimental, as youth often does become, under divers kinds of influence, grow necessarily misanthropical, and shun society: the world, in fact, in despite of these reveries, being a merry world and a laughing one in general, and thus not suiting their humour. In this general hatred to mankind or to its society, is included a most especial aversion to those of the same class, profession, or pursuit; as such have always the right and the means to step within the circle of intimacy, which the sentimentalist would preserve sacred. For this reason the festive board of his fox-hunting friends would have been relief and delight to our curate, in comparison with the little ecclesiastical, and yet convivial synod, in which he was forced to mingle: not that St. George despised his profession, or disliked to be reminded of his being of it—on the contrary, his idea of it was so lofty, even arrogant, that the coarse samples of the ministry around disgusted him.

The honest clerics were, like other honest men and Pats, making themselves merry over a jug of smoking punch, in conversation of all

careless kind, indulging in that ease of attitude and thought, that conviviality always inspires after fatigue. However their conversation wandered, it still returned to the idol, that for the present they all seemed to fear and worship. No mess-table, which I take to be the most flagrant specimen of despotism and slavery in the modern world of society, ever stood in half such awe of the Colonel, as did our *ministruli* of their great commanding officer, the Primate: his power was supreme, his thoughts on such a subject leaned to such a side, and were irrefragable. I never blame the haughtiness of men,—for the *parvenu* is never half so prone to be domineering, as the candidate *parvenu* is to be servile.

St. George, who from habits of independence and gentlemanly breeding, as well as from the distraction arising from his feelings, had looked forward to this Visitation with nothing like awe, began here to participate in it. Cleric after cleric dealt forth *fee, fau, fum,* stories of the great chief, of his imperiousness, his reproofs, his dictatorial acts and manner; and it was evident that all present trembled for the mor-

row. Many owned that they had made propitiatory sacrifices for archiepiscopal favour, by presents of game, of fish, and of such good things as their respective parishes were most famous for producing. All this was new to our curate, who, although he had sworn canonical obedience, yet had not the least idea of how much in reality he was a slave. Like a young officer, who has never been to head-quarters, he had as yet no conception of the impertinent airs, with which factitious grandeur, in striving to mimick, always out-herods the real.

The Primate of whom we speak was a very worthy, excellent, exemplary man, but cold, haughty, and imperious as his ancestors. He is no more; and as, if in a higher station, his character would have belonged to history, it may fairly be claimed by the minor, or mock-historian, viz. the novelist. He was the very high-priest, as numerous anecdotes attest. One for instance, and perhaps a fabricated one, though currently reported, relates him to have signified to a proud noble, that he, the Archbishop, would do himself the pleasure of making this

Lord's Castle his residence for a day. The holy signification was undevoutly answered by a warning that the Castle was by no means at his Grace's service for that day. Still he was an upright and vigilant head of the Church; and his very hauteur and aristocratic prejudices were perhaps of advantage in inspiring him with the maxim—That those, whom the Church supported, should in turn be compelled to support the Church. In other words, that those who sought to derive a revenue from the Church, should bring something of an independent revenue, however small, to it. Other professions, the army for instance, not more honourable, absolutely required this in the greater part of those who followed them; and he rightly saw the degradation that would ensue to the Church, if it were made, as it is too much in Ireland, the receptacle for that portion of youth who are without either fortune or talent, and who are consequently unfit to earn their bread in any other working jacket than a surplice. Hence the name of Hospital of Incurables given to the Irish Church. From this principle, although

the Primate never overlooked the aged curates of his diocese, that merited his patronage, still he set his face against those upstarts, who merely made the sacred profession the means of attaining ease and affluence, without caring how much they injured its present respectability.

The awful morning came at length; and the Primate, as usual, after divine service, began to see to the presence and conduct of his clergy. His archiepiscopal salutations were not altogether in the style of St. Paul, at least after the Apostle's conversion. What they were I know not exactly, although I could quote some arbitrary commands of his brethren, some of whom are rigid with respect to faith, others with respect to conduct, others with respect to vestiture.

"You must shave off those whiskers, sir, they are unclerical," said a bishop of pious memory to a very respectable curate.

"Spare my whiskers, my Lord, if it please you," said the curate, "they and my face have been friends even from their respective youth upwards, and I would fain not separate them."

"Let the barber have done justice upon them

by the morrow," commanded the inexorable hierarch. And, in consequence, the whiskers were shaven, their ci-devant wearer appearing the next day before his Lordship with a pye-bald visage, forty years air and sunshine having bronzed the visible part of his countenance, the copsed portion remaining pale.

This did not content the particular bishop, who farther objected to the thick and clumsy soles of the same curate's shoes,—brogues, perhaps, he might have called them. But this was more than canonical obedience required: the curate demurred, and protested in full court against wearing thin shoes through muddy streets, until his Lordship would enable him, by some convenient promotion, to keep a carriage; with which demur the bishop was compelled to rest contented.

The Primate, however, was not this *martinet*, captain of the church militant, his rigour being directed to more important points of discipline, which, lest my sketches might be construed into personality, though, Heaven knows, they are wide of any living mark, I shall not enlarge

upon. Suffice it to say, that the imperious chief of the church dealt his imperious sayings around him, without exciting a countenance to assume any expressions, save of contriteness and submission; so that the great man spoke more harshly from habit, than even from spleen.

"And you, Mr. St. George, I believe," said the bishop, "in your cure, I am given to understand, great dissensions prevail on matters of opinion."

St. George bowed assent.

"The dissemination of the Holy Scripture even has been impeded, in which the Roman Catholic clergyman of the parish has been most instrumental, but not unaided—not unaided, sir, do you hear?"

"I hear, my Lord."

"And feel, I hope, sir. You—you are the very person said to be aiding this clergyman of another religion in his hostility to the general knowledge of God's word."

"I should be glad to learn who are my accusers," said the curate.

"What has that to say to it, sir? To what purpose?"

"To clear my character from such a calumny."

"Your character, sir; whose concern, pray, is your character?"

"Yours, my Lord, it should be, almost as much as it is mine," said St. George, firmly, "as I have a cure in your diocese. If your Lordship sets me the example of making light of it, I know not what value I should place upon it or conduct for the future."

The gown of the audacious youth was pulled here by several of his new friends, who dreaded that the archiepiscopal thunder would follow such a bold retort upon his haughtiness. But, to their astonishment, the spirit of the youth's reply seemed to smooth the brow of the noble prelate, more than even their humility.

"Enough, Mr. St. George, I will speak with you in private," was the bland reply of his Grace, who, as he eyed the honourable flush of indignation in the cheek of the young cleric, honoured him for it, especially as the conduct

called to his mind the family and independent fortune of St. George, qualities that he so much prized and so seldom found in young candidates for his favour. The curate himself was amazed at his own boldness and success. He attributed the sudden mildness of the prelate to dissimulation, and made no doubt that he would be the object of archiepiscopal resentment, in case any fit opportunity was offered for the exercise of such a feeling towards him.

In the accusation St. George at once recognized the kind offices of the saints, and he perceived with some uneasiness that his well-meant behaviour had afforded some handle for what they had brought against him. As he retired to his lodgings, he inwardly exclaimed against the obloquy that always besets those who act in life from a temperate view of things, against the virulence of religious differences, and finally against prelatical pride, that, instead of waiting for the self-exculpation of an accused, brands him at once, and calls forth ill-timed resentment on the part of a youth and an inferior towards a being so far above him in

rank and years. He began immediately to meditate the necessity of retreating to another diocese, when a verger, or some such humble officer of the church, touched him on the shoulder, and delivered to him a verbal request from the Primate, that he would be pleased to repair to the archiepiscopal palace to dinner.

Our curate was thunderstruck at the flattering message, that would have elevated any one of his more obsequious brethren to the very seventh heaven of elation. He was meditating on the very ungracious behaviour, by which alone he could have attracted the Archbishop's attention, and could not but think for a moment that he dreamed; but there was the bowing verger repeating the flattering message. There was no time for wonder. St. George hurried home, and straight betook himself to the palace, as he had been bidden, to dinner, leaving behind him a most fertile subject of wonder and expatiation to his brethren, who were left to exercise their respective humilities one towards another.

The worthy prelate received him with condescending kindness, and humbled St. George so

much by this conduct, that the young curate could have sunk at his feet. But the distant dignity that at the same time was blended with the courtesy of the prelate, forbade to allude to the conversation in which their acquaintance had commenced. In the course of the evening, the primate sought some private conversation with the young curate, and mentioned the allegations that had been privately made against him. St. George explained fully the state of religious feeling at Ardenmore, the preaching of O'Sing, and the obloquy that necessarily fell on him as having superseded a person so dear to his party. The having opposed the distribution of the Scriptures was observed by his Lordship to be the chief crime laid to his charge. The curate confessed that he had not spoken at the assembly convened for that purpose, there being, in fact, crowds of orators, and nothing in the shape of new information to advance.

"But, it is said, you are on terms of extreme intimacy with this Catholic priest, who proves so fierce an enemy of the Bible."

St. George, in answer, related, not without

some humour, his first interview and acquaintance with Father McDowd, which failed not to amuse the noble prelate. "And were I," continued our curate, "to follow the pastoral advice of a learned bishop, lately advanced to a Munster see, to act the missionary amongst the Catholic poor, and attempt to convert them, I, for one, should certainly be worsted in the field of controversy, as my antagonist could bring miracles in array against my simple preaching. And miracles by day, with the fierce arms of an insurgent multitude by night, would be very apt to wrest from us not only spiritual dominion, but even existence."

The Primate smiled, but observed, that without violence, the Holy Scriptures ought to be placed within the reach of all. Being too orthodox and manly, however, to tolerate New Light in the least, he tacitly approved of those parts of St. George's conduct in which he had not yielded to their wishes. "You seem a spirited youth," said he to St. George, "and very fit to hold the undisturbed middle path between these contending parties."

"Your Grace will remember, I trust, the number, the power, and the virulence of these hostile sects, united in no one point, except in hatred to the moderate and unyielding minister."

"Fear no obloquy for the future on this account, Sir. Your boldness has made a friend; which, I promise you, it would not have done, if that boldness had been other than just and upright confidence."

Overwhelmed with unexpected favour, St. George left the presence and palace of the Archbishop, and returned home to his lodgings in a mood of mind, as may be supposed, never before so elated. The Heavens seemed to rain mitres upon him; and to himself even his increased importance appeared amusing.

CHAPTER XI.

THE elation communicated to the breast of St. George by the sudden and unexpected favour of the Archbishop, had not subsided even after a night's dreaming upon the subject; and he set forth upon his return to Ardenmore in the most buoyant spirits. He had not only utterly defeated the machinations of the Saints, but had turned their hostility so to advantage, as by its means to have opened the way to his preferment, which, after what had passed, it was not too sanguine to hope for. His firm response to the great hierarch, and heroism upon the occasion, related by other tongues, could not fail to sound grateful to the ears of his mistress, who at the time, he made no doubt, sate pondering

upon his worth, and anxiously awaiting his return.

Nothing occurred in his journey homeward worthy of being noted down, except that on the second morning, soon after he had quitted the mansion of a friend, where he had sojourned for the night, he encountered a carriage and four, driving with all the speed to which bribes and whiskey can impel Irish postillions. The transit of the equipage was too rapid to allow of the curate's noting the persons travelling in such haste, but although he could not recognize them, it was evident that they recognized him; and even after the carriage had passed, a head was protruded from it to obtain a further view of St. George. For a considerable time he put all his powers of conjecture to the stretch, to discover who the rapid traveller might be; but he had not obtained a glimpse to guide him, and left it to future chance to inform him or not, as it might happen.

He arrived in Ardenmore late; but the lover did not fail, as soon as he had satisfied the cravings of hunger, to seek the abode of his

mistress. With a heart full of joy and promise, the curate wended his way through the dark streets of the village to Ardenmore-House. He rang the bell of the avenue portal, which he was surprised not to find flung open at his summons. On the contrary, an old dame, without putting forth a hand to raise a bolt, quietly demanded,—

"What his honour might plase to want?"

"Are the family out to-night?" demanded the curate.

"They're gone to Dubling, the Master and the Misses," said the porteress, "the day afore yesterday."

"And when are they to return?"

"Troth, an myself doesn't know."

This was a very disagreeable conclusion to our curate's dreams of happiness. "Were all the family well?" asked he.

"Quite well."

"Their departure was very sudden."

"Ou, ay; these things be best done in a hurry, sure."

"What things?"

"Nauthing."

"That doesn't require much hurry, my good woman."

"Yes, in troth, an your reverence is right; but it's a wild night for gossip."

St. George returned home in a mood of mingled dolour and anger, considerably increased by the baseless dreams and elation of the past day. He was unable to solve the enigma of the Penningtons' departure. He thought even of the coach and four—but that could not be. After a great deal of doubt, and imaginings of the worst, which pleased his humour in the commencement, a cooler view of the circumstances induced him still to hope. And his very rational conclusion was, that the pique which had arisen, unfortunately on his account, between the family of Ardenmore-House and the Lowries, might have contributed to hasten this trip to the metropolis, which, independent of any such cause, was agreeable and customary at the present season. Com-

forted by this flattering unction, though considerably crest-fallen, nevertheless, St. George abandoned himself to repose.

Amongst the letters that the curate found awaiting him the next morning, was one from his friend, of whom he had made enquiries respecting Bulger, the lover of Martha Byrne. And this reply informed him that Bulger was not only in the land of the living, but advanced to the rank of sergeant, and at present, as far as he could make out, on furlough. St. George was anxious to communicate the tidings as speedily as possible to poor Martha. He was not certain, however, whether the Byrnes had as yet removed from their old tenement on the estates of Laylands to the new farm that he had procured for them. In his uncertainty he bent his steps first towards their former habitation; but upon approaching it, he found that they had already left it: the door was closed, that unusual appearance in Irish cabin or country-house; the bawn silent, and deserted even by the cattle, while the green pools lay undisturbed by the puddling of either duck or child.

A deserted cabin, and above all a deserted Irish cabin, possesses little of the picturesque or the interesting to attract the steps of the contemplatist. But here was one in the bawn of the Byrnes' deserted dwelling, regarding around him with feelings evidently of interest and disquiet. It could be no other than Michy Bulger himself, as St. George, as well as the reader, in a moment guessed: his upright mien and neatness would have bespoken the soldier, even if the curate's thoughts had not been at the moment running upon him.

St. George approached, to allow him the opportunity of putting any questions respecting the inmates of the cabin, whom he looked for in vain. But Bulger was evidently afraid to ask a question. He had avoided the town, and came to reconnoitre, unknown and unnoticed, as he hoped, the state of the land; fearing not so much to meet the desolation that was now before him, as to see the cabin too comfortable, stocked not only with its usual wealth and population, but with a superaddition perhaps of a progeny born to Martha in a state of

wedlock more worthy of her, than her father had esteemed him. The desertion of the place filled the youth with other and less selfish fears. To knock seemed useless; and as his purpose was to make a silent retreat from his native place, in case Martha was untrue to him, or no more, he paused to ask of any one the truth.

The curate was but too well able to sympathize in his feelings, and broke silence by asking him at once, whom he came in search of?

"One Tim Byrne," was the reply, "if ever you heard of him, Sir."

"I know him; but he does not live here now."

"Oh, then, I suppose he has moved since his daughter left him," replied the covertly-enquiring Michy.

"What daughter?" asked the curate, resolved to punish his closeness and dissimulation.

"Martha, I think her name was," said the soldier; his stout heart failing as he uttered the name.

"A small, cross-made, deformed girl?"

The soldier grasped his stick. "It's game

you're makin o' me, Sir? And if you knew—but, howsomever, ——" Here he perceived a smile on St. George's countenance. "Tell me, Sir, is Martha Byrne alive; and ——"

"She is, in truth, alive and well, Michy Bulger;" said the curate, happy in making happy, "unmarried, and waiting for you."

The soldier clenched both his fists and held them forth for a single instant. His prayer of thanks was a silent one; but, as uncle Toby argued, not the less fervent for being said in a hurry.

"Then the old man's pride is low?" said Bulger.

"These hard times have brought Tim Byrne low enough," said St. George. "It is but the other day that he was compelled to quit his old farm. However, through the kindness of Mr. Pennington of Ardenmore, his change has not been for the worse."

"And the old women and Martha,—tell me of them? For I know by your look, that you must have been the kind friend that has brought 'em through."

"All, I believe, as you left them, Bulger; and sorrowing, I believe, more for your fate, than for the misfortunes that have come upon them."

"I said that much of Tim, when he drove me away," said the soldier; "though curse me if I wished it. Any how, it's past; and if the ould people are cruel at times, it's often for the best, sure. I have the right to say that, any how. But would your reverence, or your honour, be so good as to direct me the way to Tim's new farm. Poor Martha! she will be glad to see an ould friend, I think."

"I was going thither myself," said the curate, "and will shew you the road."

Not from any fear lest the delicate nerves of Martha Byrne might give way beneath the shock of unexpected happiness, (although that made some slight part of the considerations,) but more from the love and propensity we all have to contemplate our fellow-creatures unconsciously on the brink of good fortune, and to enjoy their surprise, St. George compelled Bulger to permit his preceding him a space,

that he might prepare, in some degree, the household and Martha for so unexpected a visitor.

"Long life to your reverence!" cried Judith Byrne, as St. George entered their new domicile, which the old woman and her step-daughter were busied in setting to rights; "if you ever was welcome, you must be welcome *here;* it's long since we've seen you, and sure I know by the corner o' your eye you bring good news, that I do in troth; now mind, Martha, if I'm right or wrong."

Poor Martha did not need her attention or anxiety to be excited more than it always was with the sight of St. George.

"Martha!" spoke the curate at once, "I have to inform you that Michael Bulger is alive and well."

"Thank God and the Virgin for that, any how!" ejaculated Martha, clasping her hands, —"though he has sent no tidings of it."

"He has prospered too, I understand, and obtained promotion by his good and gallant conduct."

Poor Martha's eye filled with tears of pride, but not unmingled; for she coupled his promotion with his silence and neglect. "He cannot rise higher than I wish him."

"Troth! and that he can, if he be ungrateful and forgit himsel," said Judy, more alarmed.

"What would you say, if he were coming home to you, Martha?"

The girl's tears stopped as she looked wistfully at the curate: "Ah!" said she, "I ha' sorrowed too long for Michy, ever to hope to see him again; it isn't o' Martha he's thinkin, now that he's reached command. But he's prosperous," beginning again her interrupted household work, "and I'm contented."

"It's more nor I am yet," exclaimed Mich Bulger himself, as he burst in upon them, and into the arms of Martha.

The delight of St. George was scarcely less than that of the young couple themselves; but the reflections of Tim Byrne, as soon as he learned the return of the young soldier, were the most boisterous of any. The driving away Michy had weighed like a sin upon his conscience, and

his relief was perhaps the greatest. The old farmer danced for joy, and now defied all the saints in Christendom to work him farther harm. He vowed that Father M^cDowd should be sent for without delay; and was, with some difficulty, prevented from setting forth himself in search of the good priest, and bringing him to put an end, at once, to all Martha's troubles. But the old women should have time to make preparation for the festivity, and were dissentient from Tim's hasty measures.

"And so, Michy, my boy," said Tim Byrne, "you see the ups and downs of the world. You hadn't been gone a year afore the world turned wrong with me, that was never known to be out o' luck afore; and, what with the poverty, and the priest, and Miss Jimmy, (the divil send her a bachelor), I was fairly ruinated, till the young minister, long life to him! stepped in and comforted us, and at last got us into this snug place; smaller, you see, than the ould, but as sweet a bit of praty ground as any in Louth, at a conscionable rent, and a known one, which is the best of it. But as I

was goin to tell you, in the downfall away went all Martha's little savings; if you have an eye there, boy, ye 'll be disappointed. Sorrow a halperth has her father left poor Martha! barrin a bed, sich as it is, an a dresser, an her own honest face,—and that's but little for a farmer's daughter."

"Lave your ould thoughts, Tim Byrne," replied Michy, "little I cared for money, a poor boy wid you; and a soldier, I care less. I've got enough out o'the Frenchmen, and his Majesty King George, long life to him!"

Such was the wooing of Michael Bulger, the fortune and settlement of Martha Byrne. St. George, having enjoyed for some time the sight of perfect happiness, was about to leave the contented family to its own undisturbed arrangements, when the entrance of Father M'Dowd prolonged his stay. The good priest seemed in the height of good spirits. One would think, if such were not forbidden to suppose, that he too had found a long-lost mistress, true to him and kind, as Martha Byrne had proved to her swain. His ejacula-

tions, for to plain speech he could not descend, certainly ran upon some one of the fair sex; whom it appeared, at length, he had got rid of, not won.

"She's gone, neighbour Byrne, the holy road to the North. I'm gladder of hers, nor of ten weddings, that would have lined these pockets with money."

And the priest, with a furious inclination to dance, somewhat repressed by the gravity befiting his cloth and vocation, compromised his dignity with his desire, by abandoning only one foot to saltatory motion; with which one he went through divers heel-and-toe steps upon the floor, whistling a would-be gay ditty to his foot's *pas seul*.

"Sorrow a matter who's gone, Father Mac!" said Tim Byrne; "here's the boy that's come back," slapping his future son-in-law upon the shoulder, "and that's work for your craft."

"The more the merrier—take a foe and send a friend, is better luck nor you deserve, Tim."

"Why, who are ye talking of?" asked the

farmer. And St. George, growing curious, seconded the question.

"Arrah! who should I be talking of, but Miss Jimmy Lowrie, that drove you out of your home, Tim, because you wouldn't be a good boy, and larn your children the English Bible?"

"What of Miss Lowrie?" demanded St. George.

"Why, she 's off, to be sure, the beautiful Saint, off to Portpatrick, in a hurry, to be married. And not a horse is left in Ardenmore, with the Laylands folk sending and scouring the kingdom after Miss Jimmy."

"It wasn't ten minutes since that I was wishing ould Nick, saving your reverence, to send her a bachelor;—I'd like to know who the ould boy has sent," said Tim Byrne.

"One of his breed, sorrow another," quoth M^cDowd, "I never saw smile on his cheek, nor a sup in his eye, all the time he was in Ardenmore. But two good deeds he has done, this Mr. O'Sing, the takin himself off, and then coming back for Miss Jimmy."

"O'Sing!" exclaimed St. George; and he

recollected the coach and four, and its inmates who had, at least one of them, recognized him.

"I knew," said McDowd, "that she'd cut some strange capers, as soon as the schooling ran wrong with her. Och! them ill-blooded, restless folk—they must be doing something—good or mischief, it's all one to 'em."

"We'll celebrate both weddins at once," said Tim; "myself doesn't know which I'm more plased at."

Having been astonished with this further freak of fortune in his absence, St. George left the cottage, pondering much, if in the midst of all this marrying and giving in marriage, it was his fate to find his day dreams completed, or to pine in disappointment. He found all Ardenmore in talk and confusion respecting the unexpected flight of the saintly Miss Jemima;—Old Light counting it as a capital joke, and the New extolling it as a disinterested affection towards a religious and holy man, despising the worldly views and family pride of the elders of Laylands. The flight had been too well arranged, and its discovery too tardy, to admit of a successful

pursuit. Roadsters and hunters were fatigued alike in vain; and young Harry landed upon the Scottish coast but in time to behold his sister as Mrs. O'Sing. Harry, who though no advocate for a *state of grace*, strongly favoured *free election* in matrimonial affairs, wished his saintly sister joy, and regretted little more than his favourite mare's wind, almost broken to no purpose in the pursuit.

St. George began to perceive, as most likely the reader has already done, that affairs in Ardenmore were drawing fast towards a general *denouement;* and he was exceedingly anxious to ascertain what would prove the end of his own particular love-adventure. Miss Pennington, on leaving Ardenmore, had not left any communication for him. "'Twas passing strange!" He knew not what to think, and became at length so sick of suspense, that he would willingly have agreed to resign all the future blisses of love, if its present pains were spared him, and his heart guaranteed against all future recurrence of them.

In despite of Louisa's absence, silence, and

the various reports respecting her, still the uppermost idea in the curate's mind was the parting scene, in which Miss Pennington, overcome by his eloquence, had plighted to him her troth. To any whisper derogatory to this sacred contract, he would not listen. She appeared to him as sincere as warm, and however his confidence might misgive at intervals, the curate still awaited her return to Ardenmore with confidence.

To recur to Louisa herself. Never had prude or coquette been so completely taken by surprise, as she had been by the sudden and unusual warmth of the young curate. But the moment previous, she had been punishing him with raillery and mocking; and in stepping forth in his company for the stroll, which Mary had proposed, there was no miracle, not the last of Hohenlohe's working, that would not have seemed probable to her, in comparison with her yielding her troth to this youth, or being subdued into final acquiescence by his powers of wooing. Nevertheless, such is the force of sentiment, when the heart kindles with it, that in

a short space the sighing youth was metamorphosed into an ardent and irresistible lover; and the coquette surprised into an approval of his suit, in one of those accesses of tenderness, that become less frequent to the fair as years roll over them, and at the same time more dangerous.

In the pride of conquest and the full anticipation of happiness, the curate departed to the archiepiscopal court; whilst Louisa, as the romantic eloquence of St. George dissipated from around her, awoke to a sense of that remorse that always follows a hasty step taken by the cautious, even be that step ever so prudent or so wise. The awful promise had been given, and without a moment's thought—scarcely a moment's struggle. She, who had played and dallied with the hopes of hundreds, and in all flirtations had come off heart-whole, and with flattered vanity, to be thus captured, even in despite of herself, forced to yield, without having calculated or premeditated the important step. All the powers of self were roused within her—vanity took sick—pride took fire—and, in the general perturbation of her feelings, the slight

sentiment of love that existed amongst them overwhelmed and forgotten. She paced to and fro in agitation, to the great delight of Mary, who had witnessed the scene, and now watched its effects upon her subdued cousin. But the simple girl, who knew not yet the thousand petty trifling feelings that the heart splits into when it grows old in self, could imagine Louisa's thoughts to be nothing dissimilar to her own.

Wedded she must be at length, confessed Louisa to herself. To remain in a state of singleness, and resist St. George, with her late promise, was impossible. And to wed him (for the calculation of prudence was then uppermost) was, to say the least of it, by no means the most wise resolution in her power. He was not rich, yet her considerations were not so selfish as to prove so false merely for the enjoyment of a better income; but then he was young, sensitive, fanciful, and expected angelic qualities in a wife. The curate was in the poetic season of life, she in the prose. She could not but feel this: and, with her mature habits, a head of

various active occupations would suit her better than a contemplative stripling. Then the world's eye;—how much better faced beneath the arm of the former, than of the curate. To crown all, her propensity to jilt, even for nothing more than the jilting-sake, was extreme; and the present was the last moment allowed for the exercise of this, her favourite pastime. What was to be done? Sir Starcourt was in the metropolis—how affected to her, or in what humour, most uncertain. A journey thither would discover; and if the baronet proved unmanageable, there were excuses many for the journey; and St. George awaited her. Louisa was delighted—at home to her self-content, in these schemes. She possessed influence enough with her uncle to win him to her purpose of journeying to Dublin; and the pretence she used was, the pique between him and the Lowries, that rendered Ardenmore House disagreeable for the moment. Every thing to poor Mary was inexplicable; but she had no voice; and the family of the Penningtons in consequence left Ardenmore for the metropolis.

CHAPTER XII.

THE first tidings that reached our curate respecting Miss Pennington, in any thing like a questionable shape, were conveyed through the unceremonious medium of the Drogheda Journal; which were, that, on such a date, in such a church, and by such a dignitary, the Reverend Sir Starcourt Gibbs was joined in wedlock to Louisa, only daughter of the late William Pennington, Esquire, of the county Louth.

The paragraph was decisive, brief, and pithy, the best possible mode in which the cup of disappointment could have been presented to the lips of St. George. He had been nervous upon opening the paper; his heart beat by the force of presentiment, stronger, higher, quicker, as his

eye neared the births and marriages—the first glimpse of the name was enough—he laid down the paper—certainty, at any rate, was relief. After giving vent in a sigh to the first concretion of sorrow, the jilted man smiled, as he commenced reading the paragraph word by word. Whilst he proceeded thus leisurely, the lip exchanged its smiling curve for a curl, and anon for a quiver,—relapsed a moment back to a ghastly expression of carelessness and mirth, intended for a smile, which the curate stoically raised as a barrier against the flood of tenderness and anguish that was gathering within him. But the waters of bitterness soon arose to an uncontrollable height, and swept at once over and away with all our hero's stoicism and affected indifference. He wept like a child, at first involuntary, and afterwards voluntary, for a medium of grief is the greatest of all torments. Distraction and apathy, the two extremities of sentiment, are both delightful moods in their way; at least each has its charm. But any of the intermediate steps between one and the other are intolerable. We can allow of no com-

promise between the possession of feeling and the want of it, without at once both suffering anguish, and despising ourselves for suffering so partially. St. George felt this, and wept and raved, willingly and propensively, in "Cambyses' vein," for an hour. Now, by this, I would not impugn his sincerity, or mock the curate's sorrows. He felt deeply at the instant, as ever did Werter perhaps, and (creed permitting and heroism tending that way) he might have chosen a remedy as lulling. But sentiment and self are so closely mingled in our dispositions, that, like the gases that form our atmosphere, it would require nothing less than a moral chemist to separate them, and present us with a pure specimen of each. In the pages, that pretend to depict life, it cannot be done.

There are degrees of kinds of self, however; and that which mingled and made part of the better feelings of St. George, was of purer kind than the world's in general. It was not the wound inflicted on his vanity that the student felt: this would have been the sole pang of Louisa in a similar position. In him, the smile

or sneer of commiseration had no horrors. The torturing reflection that he had been deceived, outwitted, gulled, did not derive its pang either from the world's laugh that was to follow, or from the idea that another had been able so to deceive him. He felt none of that feeling, which I have observed as so characteristically and peculiarly *English*, viz. the horror of being over-reached, or as it is vulgarly said, *done*. St. George's anger on this point arose against himself—against his sanguine temper, that was ever betraying him into absurdity—against his imaginative propensity, which thus led his feelings forth to their pain and betrayal. He struck his forehead in resentment more against himself than against Louisa Pennington, and cursed (but mentally) not female fickleness so much as his own boy's folly.

He had been so happy, too, in his schemes of study and of life—so absorbed and so contented in them—all which had been foregone, forgotten, interrupted, for this new dream. And he recalled all the tacit arguments by which fancy had seduced him into love.

"Ay!" ejaculated St. George, "and our union was predestined forthwith. We were born for one another. This was amongst my sage convictions. I could not fancy myself in love, without attributing the instrumentality to fate—a proper condescension on the part of so potent and mighty an agent!" And the curate could have laughed, if his risible faculties had not been suspended by grief.

Thus was the first day of his disappointment passed in sorrow, restlessness, and torment by St. George. For the greatest part of it he had remained shut up with his meditations; not thinking himself, moreover, capable of making up a countenance sufficiently careless to face the prying eyes of a country town, so sharp upon such occasions. From this, however, he was not defended even in his own garrison. St. George's attachment for Louisa had of course been known to the townsfolk as soon, if not sooner, than to his own breast; and the births and marriages of the above-mentioned Drogheda Journal, met some score of other eyes than those of St. George, about the very time that this

disagreeably struck his. The half score of mouths that appertain to this score of eyes failed not to spread the wonderful tidings of Miss Pennington's sudden marriage, and amongst others it reached the ears of St. George's landlady; for, as we have before hinted, he had but lodgings in Ardenmore. The kind and benevolent dame, knowing that the fatal journal had gone up to her reverend lodger, became exceedingly anxious lest he should commit some rash act in his despair,—a conclusion that to her woman's heart seemed probable; and she accordingly listened for sounds of life in the apartment above. She heard them with a vengeance, as the rapid and agitated steps of the curate

> " for a mall,
> Paced his room's diagonal."

" He 's walking the fit off, any how, if the joices 'll bear him," said the good woman. But as these sounds ceased, and long silence ensued, her terror began to recommence. She ascended the stair, and listened, even at the keyhole; but a Werter-like silence reigned in the curate's

apartment. The listener crossed her forehead, breast, and two shoulders, with a trembling thumb, and laid hold upon the handle of the door. She turned it,—opened it,—her fears divided 'twixt startling the living or the dead:—no St. George was there,—the fatal journal lay on the table. The old woman crossed herself again, as she looked round to mark if any deadly weapon, or token of destruction was visible. He must be in the inner apartment, thought she, and inward, accordingly, stepped, to behold the catastrophe that her fears portended—the dead unbroken silence could proceed from no other cause. Bending slowly forward, she peeped into the curate's inner apartment, and beheld him partly stripped; not only pale in countenance, but white, with naked razor before his naked throat. The old woman shrieked, and fell senseless on the floor. St. George ran to her aid, likewise did the household; and the curate found himself surrounded by intruders at the very time that, of all others, he had most desired seclusion.

"What in the world brought you here, Mrs. ——?—what has happened?"

"Happened!" cried the recovering dame; "hear him. Only look at the razor, and the blood!" which truly did trickle down the curate's throat. But the witnesses seemed not to participate in the terrors of the mistress of the household, and saw plainly what her wrought-up state of nervousness had prevented her from perceiving, that the love-lorn curate had been in fact—shaving, without intention of any hostile kind to his throat or chin, until the good lady's shriek had produced in slight part what she had dreaded.

After uneasy hours of thought, the curate had summoned up resolution, and had determined to steel his mind, and pursue the old avocations which his long reverie had interrupted. And he had commenced acting under this laudable resolution to go through the duties of his toilette with scrupulous care, when the intrusion of the landlady came to disturb his equanimity. Angry at the curious impertinence of Irish and of village hags, St. George sallied forth beyond their reach, to air his sorrows in solitude, and

exchange them, if he could do so, for resignation and some manly purpose.

The face of nature which he now confronted, its solitude so different from that of the chamber, called forth afresh the tide of his sorrows. The sense of his loneliness in the world was the masterthought of sadness; and he felt this abroad,—with the wide, cold prospect of earth's sufferer before him,—more than he had felt in his chamber. In the new scene his mind went through the same monologue of thought as before, and recapitulated its sufferings even more wildly; but the revulsion, the relief which followed, was more soothing, more tranquillizing; and with the shades of evening, he returned in a mood of sober and firm sadness, unmingled with frenzy.

Sorrow ebbs like the tide; in action it seems to flow, and it is only by regarding it at intervals, that we perceive it to be making its retreat. The paroxysms of our curate's grief were stronger and more vehement the following day, than they had been the day of his learning his

disappointment. He had leisure by that time to bring all his dolorous ideas, all his mental eloquence to bear upon the subject: and, at times, to himself or to others his regrets might promise to be eternal. By the end of a week, however, the flood, to recur to our simile, had receded far; the uppermost thoughts of the youth out-topped his grief; and our curate, in short, began to look with a very philosophical eye upon his disaster.

The return of the Penningtons to Ardenmore-House was in the mean time announced; an event which, though necessary and foreseen, somewhat disturbed St. George's philosophy. Still he plucked courage upon the occasion, since of necessity he must visit the old abode of his lost coquette. Mr. Pennington wore his usual frank, hospitable manner; and the kind-hearted Mary was cordial even to tears, which were not a little embarrassing to the curate.

"I am condemned to live the old bachelor at last, Mr. St. George," said Mr. Pennington. "Louisa's gone, Heaven be praised! for her sake. Though, I am sure, I know not how it

has come about; or what whim that has been reining her in all her life, should have spurred her at once to matrimony. But these women are strange creatures!"

St. George said not a word.

"And here's Mary. Miss Lowrie has made a strange step," said the old gentleman, interrupting himself.

"In truth, we were all much surprised," observed St. George.

"Upon my word, ye young ecclesiastics are a dangerous race."

St. George coloured; but there was nothing in the voice or manner of Mr. Pennington that indicated allusion, or the knowledge that would lead him to make any.

"However, as Sterne's proverb says, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Miss Jemima's flight to the north has unsainted my friend Lowrie. I have been to see him since; and he is as penitent for his past over-religion, as ever saint was for his unknown transgressions. And the end of it is, Harry has won upon his father. One wedding brings on another; and, I believe,

my little Mary's going to leave me too. Come, Mary, Mr. St. George must be in the secret, you know, as he is the owner of the established gluepot, for gluing young people of this parish together."

Mary blushed, and was about to make a retreat, when her father prevented it.

"Stay, Mary, till we receive some news in return for what we have communicated. How go on our friends, the Byrnes, Mr. St. George?"

The curate related, to the great surprise and delight of Mary, the unexpected return of Bulger, and the complete happiness of Martha Byrne, and her whole family.

"Weddings upon weddings," said Mr. Pennington; "for all my life, it is like the end of a novel. And here's a new tenant for the vacant farm at Laylands, which will transport Martha back to her old abode."

"It was there I surprised Bulger," said the curate; and he mentioned what he before had not taken time to do, the circumstance of his surprising the soldier contemplating the deserted abode of his mistress.

Mary was interrupted in her admiration of the romantic coincidence, by the entrance and fond greeting of Harry Lowrie, who made the earliest use of his father's conversion. The youth shook St. George cordially by the hand, and amongst other obliging questions, asked him, "When would he want his mare for another fox-chace?" Which offer, notwithstanding his memory of its former efficacy as a remedy for pining, the curate did not for the present accept.

"I thought her sporting days were over, Harry," said Mr. Pennington.

"I' faith! nearly so, since she took to the road."

"But what has become of Jemima?"

"Off for O'Sing's cure, I suppose, in the saintly west, where she is to be made happy in a well-peopled school-house. I wrought upon the old people to forgive her, which they had consented to do, until her letter arrived, announcing her union with O'Sing. Such an exhortation, and dated Gretna Green too; but the Saints have no idea of congruities. My father,

and above all, my mother holds out in dudgeon, at Jimmy's first running away, and then sending a sermon, instead of an excuse home: and for a time she must rest in disgrace."

"So much the better, Harry; let her remain in exile, whilst we shear New Light of its supererogatory beams, and make my old friend Gervas, thy worthy parent, contented with the good old lantern of the good old church. Will you aid us, Mr. St. George?"

"That will I zealously," replied the curate; "but, I fear, preaching is not the mode."

"No, no, you are right; we will have feasting, and jollity, and mirth. Weddings and dances by the score, all under pretext of making Laylands profane and forbidden ground to the O'Sings." Harry here turned off in conversation with his destined bride; and the curate, after a remark or two, was retiring, when Mr. Pennington stopped him. Mr. St. George, you must not leave us; nor you, Harry; we expect some friends. You guess whom. The month is not up certainly, but you are friends, and must

help to receive the bride. Sir Starcourt and Louisa are on their way to their seat, and promised to dine at Ardenmore House in passing."

St. George made no verbal protest to this, but attempted to effect at once a bodily retreat. But the Irish ways of hospitality and invitation are not confined to polite pressing. Main force is no unfrequent means put in practice by it to secure or detain refractory guests—nay, I have known a band of active domestics sent forth to scour all roads within five miles of the habitation, whose owner had taken the hospitable whim for the day, to compel every traveller, whose coat happened to be whole at his elbows, and at the same time not decided frieze, to tarry, maugre his business or his pleasure, and partake of a night's feasting and festivity. Let not, therefore, my more civilized reader be shocked, that the arm of Mr. Pennington held the curate tight, and by the only mode of persuasion that St. George could not, and would not have resisted, detained him, until the carriage of Sir Starcourt drove up the avenue, and

disembarking straight the newly-married couple, cut off all retreat from our hero.

St. George remained petrified in a situation, which he judged must prove equally painful to the lady as to himself. But Louisa, as soon as she had received her uncle's cordial salute, approaching St. George gaily, though not mockingly, stretched forth her hand. The curate, who had made up his mind to look daggers, looked none.

"I wish you joy, Lady Gibbs."

"And I, Mr. St. George, wish you joy with all my heart."

St. George coloured high. Mary was thunderstruck; and Mr. Pennington exclaimed, "Is our curate, too, added to the list of Benedicts?"

"He's upon a much better list, I promise you," said the gallant Sir Starcourt.

"What! have you not heard?" Universal silence answered on the part of all in the negative.

"Doctor Cremoran, our rector, is dead."

"Poor old man," ejaculated Mr. Pennington, "he was ailing a long time. I thought he had departed for Buxton, not for the land of Nod."

"One journey answered for both," said Sir Starcourt; "and the last news is, that the Primate has divided his livings, and bestowed one-half, that is, Ardenmore benefice, upon our friend, the late curate of said parish."

St. George recovered from his confusion at this welcome and unexpected tidings, and he felt sufficiently elated by it to look upon his lately beloved Louisa with unwincing eye. Sudden good fortune is, I believe, stronger than any distilled cordial we have, and more effectual in communicating a firmness to the nerve, and buoyancy to the spirits. The curate took his seat next to Lady Gibbs, talked to her fluently, and with unquailing voice, and almost in the same high and easy tone that had ever subdued her. His eye, too, was equally bold; and being no longer that of a lover, it was more acute, for the beauty of Louisa, not at present in its happiest moment, by no means struck the curate as of old, with the image of perfection. He was cynic enough to espy an incipient wrinkle or two in that hitherto peerless face, and some suddenly developed skill in physio-

gnomy, which he had, strange to say, never before exercised, discovered a want of feeling and temper in the thinness of her lip, and the angular outline of her mouth.

In short, the rector of Ardenmore was altogether a different personage from the curate thereof; not in behaviour, for in externals the promotion made no alteration, but in feeling it had considerably. One of the great charms that the fulfilment of his lately-entertained hopes appeared invested with, to him, was the novelty, the untried mode of life that it promised. And not the least pang of disappointment in this, as in similar cases, proceeded from its flinging him back into his old way of life, after that he had so long and so confidently raised himself in imagination from it. But in this new gift of fortune, there was opened a wider vista, a more extensive region of novelty to expatiate in. And the mere occupation afforded by the new plans of life, which it became necessary for him to form, to imagine, and to weigh, was sufficient of itself to dispel every fretful feeling from his breast. This effect,

however, was not produced in the curate's mind till he was in solitude, and on his pillow; for the present, the first elation of the news seemed to strain his mind to a similar tone. And in his after reflections, when he considered his disposition, his weaknesses, and peculiar propensities, he rejoiced sincerely at his escape from an union, which would but have diverted him from his more beloved pursuits. In those, even of study, he became absorbed, to these wedded; and Ardenmore Glebe still holds, and I hope still will continue long to hold him in happy celibacy, a divine, such as indeed abound, outnumbering exceptions, in the Irish church, of unblemished character, liberality, and learning.

Father M'Dowd, grown the parish priest from the humble coadjutor, finds the hall-door of the parson's glebe ever open to him at evening hours, and the cruskeen not unreplenished. Although a decided anti-orangeman, and but a poor sportsman, St. George and Sir Starcourt are on the best of terms; and the sight of Lady Gibbs is as agreeable to the minister as a gale of wind to the Greenwich laid-up mariner, who

braves no more the "dangers of the seas." The Byrnes thrive at Ardenmore, and a family of Bulgers fill the deserted house and barn where St. George surprised the pensive soldier. Harry Lowrie and Mary are happy in each other. And to conclude, under the influence of the new rector, the Protestants and Catholics of Ardenmore live in undisturbed amity; the NEW LIGHT of Laylands, and its sectarian followers, being softened down to the mild and genial flame of the *Old.*

THE TOOLE'S WARNING.

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CHAPTER I.

WHETHER it be, that the progress of civilization is really ameliorating and enlightening Ireland, or that simply the world is becoming fast a very prosaic, matter-of-fact, and unimaginative world, without undergoing any real improvement or alteration for the better, certain it is, that the old superstitions of the people are fast fading into disrepute and oblivion. Their traditionary laws and history, although related casually, and handed down from parent to child, are no longer taught as a creed or a duty; but begin to be recounted with dubious credence, and with but

half seriousness, even by the lower orders. And universally as the knowledge of these tales is known and scattered throughout the peasantry, their exist few, or no longer any of those mysterious hags, who used to constitute themselves peculiar and living depositories of this dreadful lore. These do exist certainly; but they are few, and little either noticed or reverenced; and even they themselves seem affected by the incredulity of the age.

It is in the eastern counties of Ireland, those most infected with incredulity and an unpoetic love of demonstration in these matters, that the decline we have mentioned is most evident. This appears first, by the vulgarization of the island's peculiar and national superstitions. The appearance of *benshees* is no longer recorded, while that of those common-place spirits, called ghosts, becomes common: the old will tell you they remember the fairies; but for the last score of years, none will pretend to say he has seen them. A leproghaun has not been fixed, nor compelled to discover his pot of gold, within the memory of man; and the fear of thieves and cut-throats

begins to predominate over the dread of disturbing a fairy-revel or falling under an evil eye.

Very unfortunately for such beings as we weavers of a story, the most picturesque part of Ireland, the county Wicklow, has thus had its moral picturesque defaced by its vicinity to the metropolis. It is a lovely epitome of all scenery under heaven; the beautiful, the sublime, the charming vale, the sequestered dell, lie bosomed in lofty mountains, which present their bald scalps to the storm, and sink themselves, perhaps precipitously, to the brink of some lofty lake, which the capricious hand of nature seems to have surprised and imprisoned in those mountain solitudes. As a whole, the region is sublime, solemn, grand; and beauty is scattered through it in detached spots, consonant to the spirit of romance, which always builds its fairy palace, or enchanted bower, encircled by a region of contrasted ruggedness and gloom.

A nobler scene for the written drama, such as Scott's, could not exist: for, not to mention the picturesque features of the country, no part of Ireland is more rich in the solid remains of the

olden times, nor is more closely connected with, or has afforded more matter for, the labours of the antiquary; or illustrates yet by its ruins the partly fabulous, partly veracious history of Ireland's "palmy state" in the middle ages, when it stood as far before the rest of Europe in learning and civilization, as it now, alas! lingers far behind all.

All traces of these times, in the beautiful county of Wicklow at least, are confined to the architectural ruins; there is none whatever left in the habits or feelings of the peasantry. These are indeed scarcely Irish, preserving not any of the traditions, superstition, language, or features of their ancestors. As the metropolis is their market-town, they have grown into a species of rustic Cockneys; their tongue is slang; their opinions and their amusements all derive from the city, and even their superstitions, in despite of the mountainous and fame-hallowed region they inhabit, have degenerated into the vulgar kinds common to Catholicism. Numerous causes other than local situation, may no doubt be brought forward as productive of this degene-

racy; the attractive features of the county, for example, which invite the rich and unknown upstart to settle there, and oust, by his superior wealth, the old families; thus creating a higher rank in the county, ignorant of and contemning old habits and traditions; destroying that reverence for his superiors, which is the grand characteristic of the primitive peasantry; and bringing coined money amongst them,—a talisman more powerful than ever was invented by Arabic magician, for dissipating that superstitious world of aerial creatures, which were wont to surround the peasant's thoughts and visions. Gain, and commerce, and worldliness, those realities of civilization, soon put all the host of phantasy to flight, and supersede ideal terrors by cares more anxious and absorbing, and perhaps more debasing, than even that state of ignorance, which it is now so much the fashion to deplore.

Owing to these rapidly progressive causes, national superstitions are fast dying away in these regions first; and, no doubt, their disrepute will extend farther, to their utter oblivion, unless the penmen of the day exert themselves

to preserve them in such pleasing records as my friend Croften Croker has lately published. Following his example, I shall here record a story of the kind, gathered upon the place of its occurrence, and authentic so far, that the personage who related it to the author certainly believed each incident of it most devoutly.

It is curious, however, here to premise, what an opportunity may not occur in the story for observing, that those old beings, from their immense age and isolation, (having outlived all kindred,) grown the only repositories of superstitious lore, seem all aware, themselves, of the decay of this lore, and of the incredulity that is gaining ground upon it. These modern hags, the feeble shadows of the once-dreaded witch, though rare, are still to be seen, and talked with; and it is singular to observe how even *they* begin to conform to the growing sentiment of the age. They will launch with confidence into the marvels of the past, which they esteem a realm of their own, and all that has been done in it, incontrovertible;—but of the present they assert nothing: and even those

wonderful visitings and warnings that attend families, and consequently if true in olden times should continue to occur now to descendants of the same blood ; these they are very anxious to cut short, and account for their cessation in some whimsical way. They seek to draw the curtain decently over the passed, claim it for their own, and leave the present to be enjoyed, marvelless, by a worldly generation.

After a gorgeous fairy-story, related by one of those superannuated beings, as having witnessed it herself, it was asked,

"And do ye see no fairies now-a-days?"

"Oh! not myself, nor any body,—sure they are all gone to Scotland, the good people."

So, in the civilizing parts of Scotland, the good people may be despatched farther north, till the tiny race are restricted to the Orkneys, to Iceland, or the Pole.

CHAPTER II.

Some few years since, a young married gentleman was desirous of fixing his residence in some of the beautiful parts of the county Wicklow. Being fully aware of the prudent saying, that fools build and wise men buy, his object was not to purchase an hovel and a waste, that he might metamorphose them into a palace and a paradise: he wished to purchase a mansion; and this, in a county so beautiful and attractive, he found difficult. After a considerable time spent in vain search, he learned, at length, that a house and lands, called Clonmorth, belonging to some person of the name of Toole, were to be disposed of, and indeed had been to be disposed of for a number of years; and failing in finding a purchaser, had

been allowed to go to ruin. The gentleman in question, having experienced the difficulty of attaining what he sought, was not rebutted by the circumstance of the house being either out of repair or untenanted, and set forth, soon after having heard of the place, to inspect the situation and the premises.

The house stood not very far from Glendalough, in the vale of the Seven Churches, and nearer to Lough Dan, in one of the wildest and most picturesque parts of the country. Nothing could equal the delight of the candidate settler, from his entering the scenery of Wicklow through the Scalp, during his journey along the lofty road, commanding the beautiful prospect of the domain of Powerscourt, and its vicinity, and whilst he viewed the scenery around Lough Dan. The first view of Clonmorth House, however, was not so enticing; it was a plain white-washed looking mansion. The attendant fir-grove, that always flanks the Irish country-house, had been cut down; the roof, even at a distance, betrayed manifest signs of dilapidation;—in short, it was a ruin without the

respectability of one. It stood upon an eminence, open, as the saying is, to the four winds of heaven; one or other of which, for there were no impeding windows, failed not to occupy it alway.

My friend, for I may so call him, clambered over the gates, and with difficulty distinguishing the grass-grown avenue, he made his way to the hall-door of the mansion, on which he rapped lustily with his whip, with little hope, however, of seeing it opened; for, from its oblique position, it evidently stood not on its hinges, but was secured with nails against the wind or other intruders. As he had been directed to apply at the house, he repeated his knocking; and at length an old woman made her appearance, not at door or window, but standing at the windy corner of the house, holding her withered hand up to screen her face, not from the sun, which did not shine, but from the wind, which blew there, though nowhere else. The gentleman approaching her, demanded to be admitted to view the house of Clonmorth.

"See the house?—is it in arnest ye are?"

Being convinced of the perfect seriousness of the demand, the old dame, of as genuine a curve in form, and Mother Goosish visage, as ever denoted wizard, led the way to the rear of the mansion; where, in one of the ancient out-offices, she had established her abode. Here procuring her keys, she opened the postern of the neglected house, and ushered in the visitor. He was conducted through it, up stairs and down stairs, pointed out all its "convaniences" by the impartial keeperess, who left the inconveniences to speak for themselves, to which they were well adequate. My friend, who had been somewhat wrought up to an expectation of horrors, by the suspicious look of the mansion, and of its guardian, was disappointed in finding but a common-place old house, in very great want of repair, and the dame, for all her wizard look and prying eye, a decent, silent old body.

As he came, however, to this conclusion unwillingly, he looked for the established token, by which the old, untenanted chateau of romance

is always distinguished, viz. the one suite of apartments, which the aged housekeeper forbore to open, or the eastern tower, the key of which has been mislaid for ages. Truth compels the narrator often to common-place, as in the present instance; for the hackneyed incident of romance was here true for the thousand and first time. Clonmorth did not boast a tower, eastern or western; nor could its confined extent afford, by any stretch, to give up a whole suite of apartments to superstition. According to its small capacity, however, it did this. When the acute eye of my friend observed a door, that the housekeeper refrained from opening, he of course was curious to enter the haunted room. His honour was informed that it was the little parlour —a most unromantic domicile for a ghost. Still the little parlour he was curious to see; and the dame, yielding her tacit reluctance to disturb its solitude, unlocked the door in a twinkling, and entering with the light, which many passages of the house had rendered a necessary accompaniment, she displayed to the visitor the haunted

chamber,—for as such the gentleman already viewed it in his mind.

It had never been unfurnished. The curtains hung covered with dust, and were dropping piecemeal with the rents that time only had made. The ashes lay still undisturbed in the fireplace, presenting the sleepy look of a morning grate surprised ere it has been lit. The chimney ornaments stood in their old quaint attitude; but the strangest object was the table in the midst, laid out for cards, which still bestrewed the mouldering green cloth. The candlesticks, once shining silver, stood there of a dusky hue, unmoved since they had lit that seemingly interrupted game, for by dint of a glass it could be discovered that a black deuce had covered, and had been actually about to bear away little *cas*, when——But what could all this mean? The visitor felt awed; the still glistering brass nails of the ample chairs looked malicious, and the little antiquated mirror seemed to reflect the whole apartment, and its present intruders, with a mockery that redoubled their

awe, and the still desolation of the little apartment.

The visitor showed an inclination to depart: and the old woman, before she indulged him, pointed with her finger to where a crack in the wainscoat went all round the little room, about the same height at which the table stood. He noticed this; and his guide, without any comment, closed the door, turned the key, and both made egress from the postern they had entered.

My friend followed the old dame to her cabin, and sate him down without invitation on the stone seat of the chimney corner, determined to take such refreshment as she could provide, and at the same time extract from her the story of the little parlour and its untouched card-table. On the safe ground of her own hearthstone, she was not so very uncommunicative as she had at first seemed inclined to be. Moreover, my friend seemed more attracted than repelled from becoming the purchaser of Clonmorth, by the superstition that attended the place; and to propitiate a new master was an object with the

old woman. Thus, then, she related to him the story of the parlour:

"You know already to whom Clonmorth belongs—to the Tooles—and it has been theirs, they tell, since their was a stone in the round tower of Glendalough. An' this isn't the first, nor the second, nor the third, no nor the twentieth house the family has built upon the ground; for why, your honour must know, there was an ugly fate on them, and they thought to keep it off wi' change, and strong and new walls, blessed and consecrated. Troth! they say the very mortar of yon ould house was blended wi' holy water: but all wouldn't do; and they've been obligated to go clane aff out o' the land, and leave the place as ye see: for, barrin yoursel, sorrow a one ever I seed with a likin' to come into it these twinty year, that it's empty."

Here the visitor interrupted the old woman, and begged to be informed concerning the "ugly fate" that attended the Tooles, but; "in troth! she only knew bits of it like, and that same not well;" so that he was obliged for the present to

rest contented with all that she could or would tell.

"It's a warnin that comes to them afore death," continued she, in a whisper.

"What! a *benshee*?—is not that common, and nothing to be frightened at?"

"Whisht and quiet with your honour; it's no regular *benshee* at all at all, which is a kind crature, that comes keenin and sorrowin for the poor soul that's fleeting; it's another sort o' thing entirely. I never witnessed it but the oneet, and never will again, come what will: for, war I with a Toole, which I'd take good care not to be, and he or she were ould or ailing, it's I that'd be aff far enough."

"Well that is considerate, certainly."

"Whisht now and listen! It's twenty years since, or thereabout, and not one of the family had died for a long time, only in foreign parts, or on journeys, where strange things wouldn't be noticed. And all at Clonmorth was well, ay, as your honour is this blessed moment. Sorrow any thing of the ould time had happened in the new house, which, as I told you, was

strongly and holily built, in a way that cost sights of money. And the master was heard to say, that he had driven the devil out at last. Lord safe us!—the boastin' of it was the thing that spited the Ould One. Nothing cam of it, howsomever, for a long time. Things went on smooth and easy: and the frown, that all the world used to say was doomed to be written on the brow of a Toole, wore away from the family. Until one night, 'twas of a Saturday, Miss, the master's unmarried sister, was ailing for a time, but sorrow a much, though she had been a-bed for a good week or upwards. Till she began to weary of doctor's drugs and lying down, and said she was well, and had a fire in the little parlour ye was in, and sint for two or three of her ould cronies of the neighbourhood, to have a game o' cards with her,—a divarsion she took the greatest of delight in. And there they war snug,—the ould women, with the cards, and a roaring fire, and a drop to comfort them, if ony required the like. And my master was in the kitchen below with myself, doing some nick-nack—claning his gun it was, and the house was

as quiet as black midnight, when we heard Miss's laugh in the parlour above, as if she had good luck or the like. And we listened, and then there came the sound of a grin, by way of answer to Miss's, outside, or inside, or in what part of the house, you could not tell which. It was gentle at first, as a baby's laugh, but so deep at the same time, and so like Ould Nick's asy grin, that there was no mistakin' it. Up ran my master, and I by the skirt of his coat hanging, afeared to be left alone, into the parlour wid him; and there was such a laughing kept up from the four sides of the room, coming out from the wall, as it war, just as high as my hand, ye see, and coming out straight, that ye felt it cuttin you in two. And it ud stop a minute and Miss Toole, that was stricken with death, but did not faint off like her cronies, said,

"There, they are come for me, laughing that I should be playing my cards, instead of saying my prayers."

"And the grin came from the wall—ugh—it makes me shudder to think o' it. The sound of it didn't come in at the ear at all; but in the

very body ye felt it at first comin in, creeping about the short ribs—and then a laugh—and then a grin—and then a peal of laughter all round, as if hell-self were there, and right merry. And ye saw yoursel the crack in the wainscot."

"Poh! that was age or warping."

"Och then, by my fec! 'twas a merry warpin the ould wainscot took. But if ye come to disbelieve me, why do you ax questions?"

"And Miss Toole?"

"She was took up a corpse."

"And your master?"

"Sorrow a more myself knows of any other. Only that after the berrin, I never laid eyes on one of the family since. They're all in England far away, or in foreign parts; and the rent goes to the agent in Dublin, a cute old counsellor, who never spakes a word about the Tooles at all. And now your honour has it all from me. It only follows the Tooles, the story I tell you; and if yourself comes to live here, not a halperth 'll you have to trouble you; and myself 'll be the better plased of company and a new master."

My friend returned thanks to the old keeper

of Clonmorth for her communications, to which he just paid that degree of attention which imparts the charm of interest to such legends, without enslaving the mind by succumbing in fearful credence to them. He was himself a native of a part of the kingdom where such superstitions were revered in all their ancient sanctity; and from early education, as well as from subsequent study, the pursuit of these moral *ignes fatui* was a favourite pastime of his. As this was a whim, however, in the indulgence of which he by all means dreaded that his rising family should partake, he paused for some time ere he decided to take and inhabit the house of Clonmorth. Away from it and its housekeeper's horror-fraught tongue, the tradition connected with the house ceased to appear so terrible, or so likely to make any impression, even if it did reach the ears of his family, whilst the enticing picture of Wicklow scenery around it dwelt on the mind of my friend, produced an hankering after a continued enjoyment of it, and at last decided him, in despite of superstition, to become the lessee of the house and lands of Clonmorth.

There at length comfortably established, after a long purgatory of brick and mortar, my friend began to make enquiries respecting the old family of the Tooles, that had so long possessed Clonmorth under so mysterious a fate. After much seeking and questioning of divers old persons, during which chance and leisure brought forth more information than prepense research, he succeeded in learning the history of the family, and of the visitation entailed upon it. And from him having derived the materials, I proceed to communicate them to my readers in a few subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER III.

It would be wearying both the reader's patience and the writer's pains, to enter into any historical details for elucidating so brief a story as the present one is intended to be. Suffice it then to state merely, that some centuries previous, the first of the family of Toole was a rapparee of noted daring, influence, and free-booting success. Such a character, inhabiting the fastnesses of his wild country, and in times when Ireland was continually more or less a prey to civil broils, could not fail to be considered by many, and consequently by himself, as a personage of importance. A large tract of mountain territory owned his sway, and the fertile realms that stretched, more rich and low, for miles beyond his peculiar precincts, paid

far more in tribute to the first Toole, than to the Byrnes or the Kevenaghs, the old feudal and possessorial families of the county. Not only in rent or tribute had the rapparee become the equal of these Irish Lords, but in following he was superior; inasmuch, as the never-failing plunder that supplied the hospitality of Clonmorth and the generosity of its owner, proved a treasury far surpassing the feudal income, whether in coin or kind, of these more peaceable and dignified nobles. The feeble viceroys of Ireland, too, in their frequent expeditions, soon came to know where the strongest power lay; where most efficient and speedy aid was to be procured; and the viceregal cabinet, in consequence, oftener purchased the assistance of Toole, than required that, always lamely and reluctantly contributed, of its loyal lieges.

No wonder, then, is it that Murragh Toole, in despite of his base and vulgar patronymic, held his head high in his own realms, and in his own opinion, setting the honour of descent aside, ranked himself as the equal at least of his brother-chieftains. But as Murragh was too

powerful to be crushed or commanded to obedience, and at the same time too mean for the high-born to hold free intercourse with, he was left to cherish his pride in the solitude of power, where it never clashed with, or was insulted by rival dignity. The hostile coming of Cromwell, however, compelled every native, possessed of power, to unite, that they might take measures of defence against the common enemy. The Black Castle was the place of rendezvous; and Murragh Toole, the rapparee, repaired thither with a numerous band of armed retainers, that eclipsed the lesser followings of the old Lords, and filled the bosoms of these nobles with jealousy. Donald Kevenagh in particular was indignant at the pride and majesty affected by the upstart Murragh; and the contemptuous glances which he cast upon the rapparee on meeting him, in lieu of any more courteous salute, inspired Toole with an indignation as vehement on his part. In the council and debate which ensued respecting the best mode of routing and annihilating Cromwell and his army, Toole and Kevenagh did not fail to differ

in opinion, and each supported his views with a warmth more than proportioned to their importance. Kevenagh was for joining those forces which fought under the royal standard; and Toole argued for decoying Cromwell into his wild country, towards which he was already as far advanced as Kilgobbin. Toole set little value on the skill-less courage of the noble, and the noble scorned the experience of the freebooter.

With the frank ferocity of that day, their mutual bitterness failed not to vent itself in appropriate expression.

"Who hath introduced this new baron amongst us?" cried Kevenagh; "truly, I wot not of his name, as registered at Tara, nor yet ennobled at the English Court; display thy right to sit amongst us, Sir, as my Lord of Toole, though the name, I fear, befits not such appendage."

"My patent of nobility is English," replied the freebooter coolly,—"English gold;"—and he flung down his sword, of which the hilt was framed of that massy metal,—"won from the

Saxon and the heretic. And here," quoth he, touching the blade, "is the seal appended, which shall defy the doubts of an impertinent question!"

Kevenagh drew a similar patent of nobility; but the broil was prevented. And the bold plea of Murragh was openly disallowed by the assessors of that noble court. In their respect for the sacred privilege of noble blood, the cause for which they had been convened was forgotten, and with one voice all commanded the rapparee to withdraw his presence and his force, if he were not contented to employ it for the cause, himself contented with the humble station that befitted his rank.

The indignant blood of Toole purpled his cheek, and his hand grasped his golden hilt instinctively, ready to obey his passion; but his plebeian heart was awed in the presence of the nobles of the land. Yet to return an outcast to his followers, was too ignominious to be endured.

"Hear me," cried Toole; "I smother my resentment for the sake of the cause for which

we are met, and plead calmly. I am of a noble race; not so purely descended as many of you, perhaps; but still your equals. O'Connor of the Tower was my sire,—he of royal race,—and I, *his* bastard, may well sit in council with nobler, but uncrowned blood, like thine, Kevenagh."

"If this be true——" cried Donald.

"Thou shalt have proofs!"

"Proofs brought from far, no doubt, and Heaven knows how procured! No; we have not time nor space to carry, like the kings of old, our chanceries with us for long-winded suits. Swear to us on the relics of St. Kevin, that thou art, or dost believe, what thou sayest; and we will credit thee for the time,—as in policy in truth is best. If thou be'st an O'Connor, even although a bastard, the attendant spirit of that royal race will not fail to be heard, as a *benshee*, at thy downfall. If it be not heard, wilt thou make a pact to forfeit all thy wealth and lands to any, say to me, Donald Kevenagh, and let thy family be outcast and beggar, as it will then be proved to be base:—all which stipulations,

in case thou art what thou sayest, are but mere words and trifles. Wilt thou swear this, Toole, before us compeers here, on the sacred stone at Glendalough?"

"I will, Donald Kevenagh, swear these oaths at thy request, though not the less thine enemy."

"That is better proof of O'Connor's blood than any thou hast as yet offered. But may I ask, why the name of Toole?"

"My mother's."

"Enough, then; let's to business, and discuss the way of war, like brethren. It is a bargain good:—or we have won a valiant noble, or the Kevenaghs a broad domain."

Thus did the synod end in amity; and Murragh Toole, as soon as the united camp moved to Glendalough, swore, in the presence of all the members, on the sacred stone, the solemn pact, that if his end were unforwarned or unattended by a *benshee*, his lands should pass to the Kevenaghs, his children be outcasts and beggars.

CHAPTER IV.

After having done good service against Cromwell, and endeavoured, to the best of his prowess, to prove himself worthy of the rank he had vindicated falsely as his right, Murragh Toole returned to Clonmorth. Remorse for his perjury followed the rapparee; but this, heavy though it weighed, equalled not the sore reflections, with which he regarded his numerous and lusty progeny, doomed, by a moment of mad vanity in him, to future beggary and shame. Murragh began to pray and tell his beads,—an unusual pastime with him; and the holy men of Glendalough were more welcome than they had ever been previously, to the hall of Clonmorth. The Seven Churches, and all their friends, wondered at the sudden conversion of the rapparee;

but his imprecations were as frequent as his prayers, and the soul of Murragh found no content.

His first applications were to the holiest men, the living sainted; but they, as soon as Murragh confessed the perjury, exhorted him to open confession of his falsehood before the world. The penitent was not sufficiently submissive or devout to obey in this point; nor yet did the advice of others, arguing that, as his lands were forfeit, 'twere better that they should pass into the possession of the church, and himself into the convent, than that all should finally fall into the hands of his foe, Kevenagh. Murragh undertook divers pilgrimages, but no rest visited, nor hope beamed upon him. At length, being on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Well, or Purgatory, in Lough Dergh, he resolved to continue his journey further into Connaught, that he might visit the settlement of the O'Connors, and there hear of, or devise some means of winning down from aërial realms a forewarning spirit, such as attended the noble born. The old chief of the

O'Connors received the rapparee with hospitality; but with a kingly pride that checked all intimacy, and subverted the hopes that Toole had formed of gaining his assistance by gifts or otherwise.

The wily freebooter, however, attached himself to a younger son of the royal race, and succeeded, by all those powers of fascination which the rich, powerful, and successful soldier of adventure possesses for the young, in winning the devoted friendship of the stripling. The use Toole made of this was to evoke, by the means of the youth, the spirit attendant on the house of O'Connor; for the call of no other blood would that spirit obey. Under pretext of following the chase, Toole decoyed him to the old Abbey of the Holy Well, where all that was mortal of the past O'Connors rested; and drawing his sword, he compelled the youth, with menaces of death, to call up before him, by the received form of invocation, the spirit of his race.

It appeared, without a rustle or a breath, not from on high nor from below—but from where it stood, as if it had swollen from a floating

atom of the air;—and it was the form of a woman in years, but not unlovely; and the spirit began to keen and weep.

"Why dost thou weep?" cried Murragh. But the spirit looked at the O'Connor youth, and made no reply; until Toole compelled the boy to repeat the question.

"For thee, my child! and for the deed of the homicide."

"Wilt thou be to the rapparee, what thou art to the O'Connors; and at what price?" demanded Toole, and he compelled the boy to repeat the question.

"O'Connor's son," said the form, "let go the hand of the churl!" and the form swelled from the lineaments of woman to the size and aspect of a giant, and laid hold of the buttress of the abbey, shaking the ruin, as if it would cause it to crumble on the audacious rapparee. But he held fast by young O'Connor; the eyes of both closed with horror; and when they opened them, the gigantic form was gone, only the voice of the spirit keening was heard outside the old carved window of the abbey.

"Churl! what have you done?" cried young O'Connor; "you have made me anger the spirit of my race, that ye might palm your base blood on the world for noble. I will proclaim you in my father's hall."

"Wilt thou, stripling?" said the grim Murragh; and as the spirit keened the last yell of the *benshee*, the sword of the rapparee struck young O'Connor to the earth.

"Now am I left no hope from the spirits of the air!" said Toole, as he looked upon the murdered body. A moment's remorse he allowed, then flung it off, and sheathing his sword, at the same time that his teeth and lips closed with the conception of a desperate resolve, "I will seek it, then, from the demons of hell!"

With this resolve, Murragh Toole fled from the vengeance of the O'Connors, and buried himself once more at Clonmorth, to meditate on darker plans for ennobling the name of Toole, and eluding the fatal snare that Kevenagh had laid for his race.

CHAPTER V.

From that day Murragh Toole forswore all pilgrimages, even to the neighbouring shrine of St. Kevin and the holy places of Glendalough. The brotherhood found no more their wonted welcome at Clonmorth; and it was noised that the rapparee had relapsed into his old ungodly ways. In the mean time his progeny grew up around him to manhood, and every new trait in them of boldness and promise reminded their parent the deeper of all he had doomed them to lose. He forgot not, however, his last resolve; and although he lingered in meditating and preparing its execution, he was not the less determined upon it. To this end, he colleagued and sought information from the wandering wizards of the time, and under their guidance he at last

fixed the day for evoking some spirit of the infernal regions, with more success, he hoped, than he had addressed one of supernal race.

An hour before midnight, on some mysteriously-chosen night, Murragh Toole departed from Clonmorth, and crossed the wild and lofty country seawards, to that still sublime, and somewhat awful spot, the Devil's Glen. Gay visitors, and sandwich-devouring pilgrims, have of late disenchanted it; but the place still bears the impress of what it was once considered,—the haunt that its name indicates. Here Murragh Toole repaired, not entering the glen by that magnificent gorge that is still the wonder and delight of the visitor, but descending into it from the lofty swamps that crown its termination, and that pour into it the torrent that dashes along through the bottom of the dell. By the side of that waterfall, which the starlight scarcely rendered visible, until the eye became more familiar with the dark spot around, Murragh descended, pausing at the foot, and opposite to a crag that jutted out by the side of the fall, jetty black, from the moist spray that

curled and rose like incense up its side. The pines upon the high hill's summit roared and crackled, as a loud gust rushed up the ravine, and in the calm moments between, the light shrubs and aspens that o'erhung the crag rustled tremulously and timidly, so that the motion of each leaf might almost be distinguished; for the fall of water was not equable, but came like waves, splashing at intervals; now overshooting the ledge far into the gulph below, with a sudden roar, and now dripping unheard down the channel it had worn in the rock.

At the precise hour of midnight the rapparee flung his offering into the stream, and invoked, with the incantation that he had learned, the dark spirit himself to appear, or, if that could not be, one of the demons next to him in power.

"I come myself at thy bidding, Murragh Toole," said the demon, as his form appeared between the crag and the waterfall, the gulph being between him and the supplicant. "What would you with me?"

Toole was proceeding with his story of his sworn pact with Kevenagh, but the demon was

acquainted with all respecting the circumstance, and cut short the narrative. "What would'st thou ask of me?"

"A *benshee* to keen at my death, and at those of my race, as O'Connor's spirit doth," said the rapparee.

"You should have come to me first with your request, my noble bastard of O'Connor. Old Nick, forsooth, is your forlorn hope. But come, better late than never,—what wilt thou give me for the boon?"

Toole pondered, not knowing well what to offer.

"You think of making over to me yourself, that soul and body of thine," said the devil with a smile; "thank you for what 's my own. If a perjury and a murder be not claim sufficient, I wot not what is such."

"I will give—do—any thing!" cried Toole.

"Stoutly promised. I will not drive a hard bargain with a friend. Those monks of Glendalough annoy me sorely, and rout me out of places where it would be convenient for me to come. Rout out the drones you, and unroof

their churches; and I will promise to you, and to your race, to send one of my spirits to warn each of their death. But hold! I had not thought of it. There will be a difference betwixt the spirit-benshees of the old races, and this one that we will send at your desire."

"I care little for the difference," said Toole, "so as it be a warning; the palpable visitation of a spirit, sufficient to prove what I have sworn, and to discomfit Kevenagh."

"The difference," quoth the demon, "is this:—That the spirits who lodge in the world's upper story, have a trick, when they descend to earth, of weeping, and of wailing sadly over what they call the sorrows and hard fate of man. Now below, be it known to you, Murragh Toole, we have but a very small stock of pathos, and can seldom, especially the young ones of us, and I can afford to send you no other, refrain from laughing immoderately as soon as we come to behold the ways of earth: so that the young demon whom I shall send to warn you, will never consent to weep and cry for a being whom he careth not an ounce

of brimstone about, but will rather indulge his propensity to grin, as soon as he beholds you at your last kick."

"A benshee is a benshee, and a warning is a warning!" cried Murragh Toole. "Let the young devil (I mean no offence) grin his best, so as he preserve my dear-bought Clonmorth and nobility to my blood."

"Keep, then, your part of the covenant, Murragh Toole," said the demon, "and hell promises you your desire." On which the demon vanished from before the eyes of the rapparee; and the noise of the wind and the waterfall alone struck upon his ear.

CHAPTER VI.

Murragh Toole returned a happy man to Clonmorth; and joyfully, for the first time, embraced his children as they ran to meet him. Noble they should be proved, to inherit his wealth and vindicated name;—the crime lay with him, and he was contented to yield his soul for the price of purchase. His part of the stipulation he did not forget, but speedily commenced harassing the holy brotherhood of Glendalough, so that starvation beset them; whilst Murragh grew fat under excommunication. To his impious hand is owing much of the decay, now deplored by the stranger, in the ancient ruins of the Seven Churches; all of which, according to his stipulation with the demon, he unroofed, except the holy kitchen of

St. Kevin, which the Saint had vaulted, whilst he covered the churches but with wood and straw. The kitchen, in the time of the rapparee a church, and subsequently a ruin, resisted all the destructive efforts of Toole, and still remains a proof of the Saint's solid care of his culinary department.

In good time, however, the head of the destroyer was brought low. The end of Murragh approached; and, as he lay on his death-bed at Clonmorth, the warning benshee was heard betokening his dissolution; not wailing, however, after the manner of its kind, but indulging in a fiendish grin, and then in loud shouts of laughter, that were nigh proving the forerunners of the whole household's dissolution, as well as of that of its head. The soul of Murragh departed, whither——I cannot say; but his lands, for certain, descended to his heirs, in despite of the reclamations of Donald Kevenagh. The warning of a spirit had foretokened the dissolution of Toole; and whether it had laughed or cried, seemed not to be of importance with the noble court before whom the

cause was brought. Indeed, the life of the rapparee had latterly been so notoriously infamous, that it was no marvel that the usual warning for him differed from what usually accompanied others of his pretended race. Moreover, he was a bastard; and the grin substituted for the keen, might have been a kind of *bend sinister* in spiritual heraldry. On these grounds the Wicklow nobles gave their decision against their brother Kevenagh, and in favour of the young Toole, who succeeded to all the wealth and power of his parent, with more than Murragh's rank or respectability had been; and the family grew to be fully the equal of any of the county chieftains.

Since that period, however, the demon had scrupulously kept his word to Murragh, and not a single descendant of his could die in peace, without the visitation beforehand of the fiendish grin. This, which had been solicited as an honour by Murragh, proved a considerable inconvenience to his posterity, who, by any means less fearful than entering into another agreement with the enemy of mankind, would have dis-

pensed with the never-failing warning. Through the space of two centuries they had tried all precautions—knocked down the old castle, built in another situation, consecrated, exorcised,—all to no purpose. At last the present house was built, devil-proof, it was thought, not only from the solidity that was given to the walls, but from the lime being slaked and blended with holy water; but our readers have already heard the vanity of the precaution in the recurrence of the old grin before the death of Miss Toole.

Holy men had been consulted continually for charms and remedies against this fearful visitation, but none could afford any efficient counsel. The possessor, who had quitted Clonmorth last, had betaken himself to the Continent. There had, by a strange but obvious fate, been no collateral branches of the family through so long a series of years, as all dreaded to ally with a race so fearfully distinguished; in consequence of which the Toole that emigrated was the sole one of his blood. He had a large family; but he still hoped, for such was his final remedy, to rid the world of these horrors, by consigning

his daughters to a convent, and by rearing up his sons either as friars abroad, or, if at home, in such a horror of womankind, that he trusted his hapless race would become extinct.

It is extraordinary how men work their purpose often in ways diametrically opposite to their intentions. So it was with Lawrence Toole; his immediate plans were all, as those of such kind generally are, utterly defeated. How, I leave the reader to guess;—what with the bad morals of foreign convents, and their subsequent destruction by the Revolution—what with the licentious propensities that always attend youth too rigidly guarded,—it so happened that in a few years the number of the family of Toole had increased to between two and three score; some French, some English. So says my legendary information. Furthermore, by far the greater part of these were wild youths, with a share of their old ancestor Murragh's blood in their veins; and consequently they mingled in all the wars which raged throughout the Continent during the first fifteen years of the present century.

In Spain especially, under the banner of both contending parties, were numbers of this hopeful progeny; all daring, gallant youths. The consequence was, that the demon of the glen found that he had no sinecure of the office he had undertaken. Day after day, hour after hour, was he called upon to send one of his young brood to warn a Toole upon the field of battle; and not an action nor a skirmish could take place, that the realm below was not called upon for a summoner. These very years, too, there was a press of business below; so that the devil, to use the language of one of the old folks from whom my friend drew his information, was in a quandary what to do. At last, he bethought him, that as Murragh was satisfied, so was he, and that a century and a half was long enough in all conscience for a fallen spirit to keep his promise. The demon, wearied out, abandoned all care of the Rapparee's descendants, and "THE TOOLE'S WARNING" was no more heard of in the country.

THE END.

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